

the challenge of nation building

JAYAPRAKASH
NARAYAN

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INTRODUCTION

Mrs Robert Helen was going through John Gunther s *Inside Asia* and was struck by a name mentioned in it The name seemed familiar to her She wrote And now you turn up in sufficiently recognisable form in Gunther s *Inside Asia* for us to verify through the University of Wisconsin that you are probably you

Jayaprakash had made a name in the freedom movement of India within nine years of his arrival from the United States We have had recurring epicurean recollections of the chicken you prepared, aesthetic memories of your beautiful immaculates as you emerged from the kitchen after cooking she continued

And a political career of 50 years has kept him as immaculate as ever Power could not stain his raiment because he always kept it at a distance *The message of his mentor—the frail old Mahatma* who aroused a sleeping Leviathan in India through the spinning wheel—became one of his life passions

In a discussion with Aruna Asaf Ali and Asoka Mehta in 1947 Gandhi remarked I have admiration for what Jayaprakash Aruna Achyut and others did in 1942 They have thought **nothing** of playing with their lives I have paid **tribute**

their fearlessness and courage He invited them to join him in preparing an atmosphere for nonviolence in the country

Jayaprakash has now made it his mission in life to fulfil Gandhiji s unfinished task

The tireless energetic youth in Jayaprakash is growing dim and frail He recently suffered from heart disease which made it necessary for him to rest but did not dampen his spirit His eyes retain the same old twinkle and beam with hope as ever A few months ago he worked a miracle an event more wondrous than the tales of the Arabian Nights About 300 dacoits of the Chambal Valley laid down their arms before him and surrendered themselves for arrest and trial before the law of the land

Jayaprakash combines in himself the essentials of Marxism and Gandhism Communism without humanism and democracy is pernicious just as democracy without economic equality is a misnomer Communism conceived a social order which would free man from alienation but it yielded only to regimentation It moulded itself into the age old patterns of power structure and concentrated power in the hands of a few individuals Gandhi made a plea to decentralise and deconcentrate power and authority in order to give it equitably to every citizen Hence the quest for freedom led JP from Marxism to Gandhism This quest is the core of his personality characterising all three phases of his life i) a militant fighter for national independence ii) a democrat and iii) a non violent revolutionary

JP SET FORTH what freedom meant to him in an article entitled 'First Things First 'Independence he wrote is a concrete thing for all the various sections of the people The masses it is true do not conceive it in terms of assemblies and Constitutions Nevertheless, to them it does mean certain very concrete things If to the peasant ground down by landlordism independence means freedom from that system it cannot be said that abolition of landlordism is to him an issue remote from independence Further independence can become real for the people only when its definition covers their fundamental needs Socialism for the masses is identified in a general and broad way with the ending of poverty and exploitation As far as the masses are concerned, their urge is to fight against the day to day oppression from which they suffer For them that struggle and the struggle for independence are the same thing one develops into the other

The elitist Congress did not like to make the organisation broadbased or the programme struggle oriented for this would have naturally endangered the leadership of the upper classes Perhaps they would have been left behind by the advancing masses

The fierce controversy which raged between the Kisan Sabha and the Congress in 1937 bears out this fact The Congress leaders found the peasant movement as conducted—challenging the supremacy of the Congress undermining the prestige and the strength of the organised expression of the will to freedom from political subjection As

a sequel to this Swami Sahajanand Saraswati president of the Kisan Sabha resigned from the Working Committee of the Bihar Provincial Con gress Committee

Jayaprakash also joined issue with the Congress leaders Politics to me, he wrote "is completely objective and impersonal Respect and love do not and will not even prevent me from pursuing resolutely what appears as truth to me I differ seriously from Dr Rajendra Prasad on many questions and I deem it my duty to join issue with him if occasion demands If it suits your purpose to denounce me as anti Rajendra Babu you may do so I know what I am about and abuse and slander will not deflect me from my path It may sound like self esteem, but I wish to tell you that I have better things to do than intrigue and mano euvre for power and position

Nehru felt the same way about the affiliation of the Kisan Sabha with the Congress In the early 1930s he advocated the creation of a broad social base for the Congress Two things are very dear to me he told the Allahabad District Board independence for this country and equality bet ween man and man The future of India lies with the peasantry

Nehru was acclaimed the spiritual godfather of the Congress Socialist leaders but the Indian Communists held him unreliable and petty bourgeois at that time 'Why do you bother so much about what Jawaharlal Nehru told you? wrote M Ahmed to P C Joshi secretary general of the Communist Party of India on March 9

1929 ' What more can one expect from a timid reformist like him?

Nehru s support to the cause of socialism of course remained lukewarm and indecisive In 1931 the Congress session at Karachi adopted a resolution—fundamental rights and economic and social changes which later came to be known as the Karachi Resolution Nehru had originally drafted it but some Congress leaders thought it was too radical and it was redrafted A few years later at the Congress session in Bombay presided over by Dr Rajendra Prasad in October 1934 the Socialists endeavoured hard to introduce a radical economic programme But their efforts were foiled by the mounting pressure of the rightwing leaders

The Congress was in fact in the grip of bourgeois liberal leaders This was very disturbing to the Socialists in the party They ultimately formed the Congress Socialist Party This was set up with a two fold objective 1) to counteract the pressure of constitutionalist leaders and 2) to intensify the struggle for independence It held its foundation congress in 1934 at Patna Jayaprakash was its organising secretary and was elected its first general secretary at the first annual conference in Bombay in October 1934

The Socialist leaders formed a Socialist Book Club and requested Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru to become its founder members Bose agreed but Nehru declined Jayaprakash was concerned Your refusal to join it would be a great blow to us he wrote to Nehru 'I admit that the club would work on a small scale but I

think it would be unreasonable to expect from the socialist movement in India results that are beyond its resources And if you will excuse me for saying so it would be unfair of you who are naturally used to doing things on a grand scale to non cooperate with the efforts of Socialists in India just because they are puny as compared with those of older and wiser organisations We are I think not unjustified in hoping that if you will not fully indentify yourself with us you will as a socialist at heart help us in doing well the little we may undertake to do Earlier in September 1934 when Jayaprakash had discussed with Nehru the scheme to launch a new party he had seemed to welcome it though as Jayaprakash wrote He cautioned me against people who talk radical but stay behind when the time arrives for action Dr Hadilkar creator of the Hindustan Seva Dal was also present during the discussion Kamaladevi and Purushottam Trikumdas had joind in the discussion with Jawaharlal

In a message to the annual conference of the Congress Socialist Party in 1936 Nehru emphasised the need for building up a powerful anti imperialist joint front and said he believed that the Congress was the only organisation which could function as such a front As you know he wrote I am vastly interested in the socialist approach to all questions The other is how to speak of socialism in the language of India I am referring much more to language of mind and heart to language which grows from a complex of associations of past history and culture and present

For the Muslim middle class, as for all other middle classes it is not religion that is important but jobs power and position Naturally over this class the ulema have little influence The Muslim masses on the other hand are truely religious but the ulema cannot reach them In the field of politics it is the middle class that has the organs of public opinion in its control The ulema are poor the nawabzadas are rich the ulema are not scholars in English the knights are the ulema being anti British cannot join the Viceroy s Cabinet the job hunters can the ulema do not know political manoeuvring the lawyer politicians thrive on it The result of all this is that while to the Muslim mass religion is everything or nearly everything—not forgetting their bread—it is not the Muslim divines who become their political leaders but the vocal middle class for which religion—except in personal life—is largely a cloak

The Muslim League was founded in 1905 but communal tension appeared to become more acute after the Congress initiated its first struggle against the Government Soon after the withdrawal of the 1920 mass movement by Gandhi a series of communal clashes took place, beginning with the Moplah riot in 1921 and followed by riots in Multan Meerut Allahabad, Moradabad Delhi Nagpur Lucknow Shahjahanpur and Jabalpur The seed of discord and estrangement already existed in the soil the British Government provided the requisite climate for its growth in order to counteract the nationalist challenge

The Indian national movement suffered from certain inhibitions and drawbacks from the start inasmuch as its leaders were drawn mainly from the Hindu intelligentsia

After World War I (1915 1918) its social basis expanded from the upper to the lower middle classes because of starvation and unemployment The philosophers of militant nationalism drew inspiration from the religious mysticism of India s past but this did not interest the Muslim masses

But the intellectuals were victims of the deceptive notion that technological and economic development would ultimately lead to the decline of communal conflict and that the emergence of new socio economic relations and identities would undercut the organisational bases on which racial ethnic religious and tribal politics rested

Karl W Deutsch formulated the concept of social mobilisation According to him this is the process in which major clusters of old social economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialisation and behaviour Against this backdrop of social mobilisation one may find a clue to the problem of communalism in India True communalism say Nelson and Wolpe is being waged not by traditional entities but by communities which were formed in the crucible of mobilisation and competition According to this view it is probably more accurate to suggest that conflict produces tribalism than to argue as the conventional wisdom would tribalism is the cause of conflict

quite secular in his *outlook but he became* a protagonist of the Muslim League because his advocacy of tribalism paid him a good dividend

This is because people s aspirations and expectations change as they are mobilised into the modernising economy and polity They come to want and to demand more—more goods more *recognition* more power They all want precisely the same things So men enter into conflict not because they are different but because they are *essentially the same* It is by making men more alike in the sense of possessing the same wants that modernisation tends to promote conflict This *again is due to the fact that scarce resources cannot* keep up with their supply Mobilised populations are thrown into direct and very personal compe *tition with one another for positions within* governmental agencies and commercial concerns for the control of local markets for admission *to crowded schools for recruitment into the army* and for control of political parties

In a culturally plural society like India social *mobilisation engenders competition among different* communities and citizens tend to see through a communal prism and to be responsive to commu *nal appeals* Communalism becomes a matter of opportunism

Communalism has other dimensions too More *important among them are 1) the differential* rate of mobilisation 2) institutional assimilation and 3) the nature and pattern of political institutions The *differential* rate of mobilisation is very much discernible in Indian society the reasons are both

social and economic *Cultural* assimilation does not necessarily bring about *structural* assimilation, it is often achieved in the secondary institutions of society while primary relations remain highly segregated by nationality or religion If mobilised and competitive communal groups are forced to interact in such cases this naturally leads to communal conflicts

As for political institutions if they 'do not possess institutional integrity and appear to be in the particular communal interests those communal groups lacking power and position will tend to question the legitimacy of the institutional order

Consequently a positive correlation between communalism and modernisation is more noticeable in the existing participant democracy where it stems from the people's desire for participation in power and decision making The proliferation of communal parties based on caste and religion became a normal feature after freedom This danger which was inherent in the system was to assume greater proportions in the future

The young socialist leaders were aware of this danger and that is why they persistently fought for clarity on the economic and political objectives of independence But the Congress leadership was reluctant to do so Its objectives remained as vague and ambivalent as ever

This lack of objectives policy and programme was responsible for many a political disaster in the ensuing years The problem Acharya Narendra Dev wrote in 1940 is not to eradicate or bring under control this or that evil in society

but to determine the very basis and character of society Politics he held 'is the expression of economic issue The *swaraj* that the Congress had set out to fashion was said to be *swaraj* for the masses but there was little light shed on this enunciation or on the means of securing it

Narendra Dev also pointed out that among the Congressmen while the larger section is an unconscious prey to capitalist ideals of social organisation there is not an inconsiderable number of Congressmen who hold those ideals consciously because they are personally interested in the industries banks insurance companies in short in all manners of capitalist undertakings and in their profits The main interest of these Congressmen in *swaraj* is that it would free native capital from the bondage of British capital and thus enable it to foliate in all its magnificance The leading cadres of the Congress are recruited from the educated middle class Now the chief characteristic of this class is that its dominating outlook is that of a social climber The middle class man desires nothing more than to lift himself to the level of the higher classes Therefore the pull of these classes towards the profits of capitalism would be a potent driving force towards a terrible social abyss

The idealist captains of the ship of State he held may lay the foundations of Indian society But what the nature of that society would be depended to a great extent on the nature of the economic policies they pursued But once the course towards capitalism was fixed it would not

so much be a question of controlling capitalism but of developing and protecting it that is of being controlled by it The Congress at the beginning had made this initial mistake the idealist captains who had inherited the ship of State from their predecessors had been reduced to nothing more than the highest executives of the capitalist class to bend all national energies into the service of that class Class conscious Congressmen had hastened the process Congressmen before independence followed the policy of compromise rather than struggle The victory of the Congress was the victory of the upper class The masses only suffered privation and miseries

The leaders of the vested interests had therefore opposed mass movements of the lower strata of the population or had distorted and canalised that movement to get concessions from British imperial ism as well as from sectional rivals This attitude prevailed among the Congress leaders throughout independence movement and it brought in its trail many consequences which proved detrimental to national unity and independence Communalism had assumed a serious turn As many as 1127 cases of communal riots were reported to have taken place in 1937 alone This was the highest figure registered in any year till then Yet it is significant in India s history of communal conflicts The year is marked by intense political activity and the British Government s announcement of a new Constitutional act

THE YOUNG revolutionary Jayaprakash was behind prison bars and was unable to follow the goings on at close quarters The way the Congress leaders were negotiating with the British worried him On July 20 1940 he wrote from prison to Nehru You can imagine how recent events have grieved and hurt us Rajaji has stabbed us in the back All of us here accept you and beseech you to lead the opposition in AICC and the country You should resign your seat on the Committee After a settlement if it comes about you must leave the Congress and form another political organisation to fulfil the remaining part of the political task of the Indian revolution

Gandhi had already made his position clear In a statement to the press on October 15 1940 he said Nonviolent Congress cannot wish ill to Britain Nor can it help her through arms since it seeks to gain her freedom not through arms but through unadulterated nonviolence He added We want to tell the people of India that if they will win *swaraj* through nonviolent means they may not cooperate militarily with Britain in the prosecution of the war Gandhi had earlier given his unconditional support to the war effort but subsequently he changed his position It must have surprised him that his intimate and trusted colleagues like Rajagopalachari and Patel declared themselves for conditional cooperation Speaking to the Bombay suburban and Gujarat Congressmen on May 15 1942 he said Mind, I am not pro Japanese Indeed Japan is too much of an aggressor for me to be that But I emphatically differ from Rajaji

Fro with what can we fight Japs? The British are the immediate aggressors

Towards the end of 1940 Jayaprakash was released from prison But he was again arrested under Rule 29 of DIR and detained at Arthur Road prison in Bombay He had been suffering from sciatica and throat trouble for some years He was later transferred to Deoli camp

Deoli an unknown place in the desert of Rajasthan suddenly developed into a township where the Government had built a concentration camp for prisoners of war from the beginning of 1940 It was now converted into a centre for holding Indian political prisoners It had 104 inmates They belonged to different political parties Communist Party 66 Congress Socialist Party 38, Revolutionary Socialist Party (Annushilan) 11 HSRA 5 and 14 unattached JP met many old friends including old Communist colleagues like Ajoy Ghosh and S S Mirajkar, in the camp

JP undertook a fast of 35 days in protest against the ill treatment of political prisoners in Deoli In its wake the British Government published a summary of documents allegedly written by Jaya prakash

Gandhi said in a statement on October 21 1941 The publication of the statement attributed to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, which he is stated to have attempted to smuggle from his place of deten tion does not so far as I can see lead us anywhere If the motive was to discredit the organisation of which Shri Jayaprakash Narayan is a distinguished member it must fail' He continued As

the correctness of the charge against Jayaprakash Narayan the method advocated by him is against the policy of truth and nonviolence adopted by the Congress and he deserves the severest condemnation But it ill behoves the Government to condemn or discredit it Frankly all nationalist forces no matter by what they are described are at war with the Government And according to the accepted canons of war the method adopted by Jayaprakash Narayan is perfectly legitimate He has had his training in America for seven years and is student of the methods adopted by Western nations in their fight for freedom To practise deception to resort to such methods and even to plot murder are all honourable and turn the perpetrators into national heroes Are not Clive and Warren Hastings British heroes? If Jayaprakash Narayan was in the British diplomatic service and by secret diplomacy achieved something of importance he would be covered with distinction

The Communists on the other hand had changed their stand On July 7 1942 the Home Department of the Government of India in a telegram to the Secretary of State stated The Communist Party of India in their announcements and circulars to the party members have recently indicated a change of front and recognising this war as a people s war in which Indian people must in their own interest make common cause with united freedom loving nations have decided if permitted to throw their energies into task of cooperating with existing war efforts The Government subsequently lifted the ban on CPI and its organs

CPI argued that after the entry of the Soviet Union into the war on the side of the Allies it had ceased to be an imperialist war The Party therefore decided to lend its support to the war efforts of the imperialist Government If a choice had to be made between independence and imperialism CPI preferred the second course because Soviet security was more important to it than India s freedom

From Deoli camp Jayaprakash wrote 'The fellows (Communists) here continue to talk of intensifying the national struggle, though at the same time they maintain that the character of the war now is anti fascist He stuck to his earlier views on the war though he expressed concern over Hitler s invasion of the Soviet Union The Soviet Union was a giant fortress of world socia lism and the proletariat he said but the question of national independence was as important as that of its defence Neither of them was less important but for the communists India s independence had retreated into the background JP s dilemma was how to pull down the fortress of imperialism and thereby free India from the bondage of slavery and at the same time help the Soviet Union in its distress

He therefore wrote Till the invasion of Russia we had looked upon the war as an imperia list war The recent action of Germany against Russia has in no way modified this position. If Russia and Britain are facing a common enemy it does not mean that their interests coincide with Russia in prosecuting the war to identical ends In any case if Russia desires to destroy

it must in the end depend upon its own resources and strength The danger which Russia faces however, is a question which as socialist it is our duty to seriously consider With all its faults Soviet Russia is a giant fortress of *world socialism and the proletariat* We cannot sit quiet when this fortress is under assault But we shall not bring succour to it if we rushed to the aid of British imperialism But it would be a mistake to relax our attack on imperialism Can we do anything to render direct aid to the Soviet without helping in any manner British war efforts?

The situation on the eastern front of India started deteriorating by early 1940 Singapore fell on February 15 and Rangoon on March 5 Japan was knocking at India s doors With these developments the differences among the Congress leaders on their attitude to the war were becoming sharper this became more apparent when AICC met at Allahabad in May 1942 Gandhi is said to have drafted the original resolution which was more revolutionary and struggle oriented than Nehru s Nehru Rajagopalachari Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Bhulabhai Desai took the view that the withdrawal of the British at this stage would inevitably mean Japanese occupation of India Speaking at the meeting Achyut Patwardhan said If we do not take decisions Jawaharlalji s attitude will lead to object and unconditional cooperation with the British machinery which must collapse If the battle of India is to be fought by Wavell we shall do ourselves discredit if we attach ourselves to him We talk of allying ourselves with the

allied nations I doubt if America is a progressive force The existence of the American army is not a fact which improves our situation This war is an imperialist war Our policy can be that we take no side

Acharya Narendra Dev also expressed his difference with Nehru I do not agree with the view he stated that the war is one and indivisible The aims of Russia and China are not identical with those of Britain and America If it is one we should join the war and side with Britain Our position has not been that we want power because without it we cannot kindle the national spirit our position has been that if the war was a people s war and there was proof of it in action we are willing to throw in our weight on the side of democracies

Rajendra Prasad Kripalani and Vallabh Bhai Patel voted for Gandhi s draft Nehru had also drafted a resolution but it fell through The Congress president did not want a split and by his efforts a compromise was arrived at AICC however requested Mahatma Gandhi to take up the leadership of the Congress to carry out a programme of nonviolent noncooperation when it became necessary In a memorandum drafted by Dr Adhikari and P C Joshi the Communist leaders, decided to give their full and wholehearted support to the war

The British Government had already indicated its mind in its August Declaration in 1940 The Viceroy reaffirmed the same objectives on January 10 1942 Explaining the threefold objectives

the declaration he assured the Congress 1) that full dominion status in accordance with the Statute of Westminster would be granted only after the war 2) that the status of practical independence was to be attained as soon as possible under a Constitution of Indian devising and 3) that the major communities of India must agree on the future set up in the country This last objective proved a thorn in the flesh of the Indian leaders Secretary of State for India Leopoed Amery repeated on February 4 the pledges of His Majesty s Government to the minorities Britain he said stood by the pledges given to India both by our general pledge as to India s future freedom and also by our pledge to the different main elements in India s national life that they shall not be coerced under a system of government which they are not prepared to accept

He released a draft declaration on February 27 1942 I declare he stated that His Majesty s Government recognises India s rightful position as a dominion equal in every respect to the United Kingdom in no respect subordinated to it but associated with it in the free and equal partnership of the British Commonwealth and thereby in the fellowship of independent and freedom loving nations the constitutional framework under which a free India is to live should be of Indian devising and correspond to Indian social economic and political conceptions and to the peculiar conditions of the complex structure But he introduces a rider His Majesty s Government should not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities

for peace and welfare to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India s life or be parties to the coercion of such elements into sub mission to such a government

Amery did not stop here He said in a memo randum that the Congress Party—which in spite of efforts to keep a Muslim element in its facade is essentially a Hindu party—in its ingrained con viction that it is the natural heir to the British Government in India and entitled to take control both of legislative and executive powers unfettered by any limitations is intransigent in its demands But in view of the experience of the Congress Governments in the provinces and of the centralised dictatorship of the Congress High Command the Muslims had decided to reject entirely any system of government for India as a whole based on a parliamentary majority executive The demand for Pakistan embodied this rejection in its extreme form He was confident that his insistence on the agreement had brought to the forefront the true nature of the Indian problem namely the existence in India ' over and above all other local differ ences of two great communities at least as separate and indeed antagonistic in culture and outlook as any of the contending nations in Europe To talk of these two communities as majority and minority he said is a dangerous misuse of terms because it tends to imply that the right of the numerically smaller community to have its individuality respected is less than larger It is after all in defence of that

we are at war today

It is evident from this memorandum that the British Government had already made up its mind regarding the future of India It found its reverberation in a public speech by Jinnah We are not a minority he said but a nation If we have adopted an attitude of non embarrassment towards the British Government we know that if the British Government is broken we are also in danger The League is the only authoritative organisation of Muslims We cannot tolerate Muslims in the camp of enemy The non League Muslims are traitors in any camp

On February 28 1942 Amery gave a fresh interpretation of the declaration He conceded that i) there should be an explicit acknowledgement that the future Indian dominion could secede if it wished and ii) that the British Government would set up what it considered the most suitable future Constitution making body immediately after the war if the Indians had not previously agreed on it themselves but also iii) that any province which did not wish to accede to the new constitution could stand out and finally iv) that the whole field of the obligation on the part of the British Government as well as of such continued military assistance as India would need, would be dealt with by a separate treaty to be concluded with the Constitution framing body and to come into force simultaneously with the new constitution This was significant in as much as the British Government virtually conceded to the Muslim League its demand for the right of secession and secondly the

British still wanted to retain their control over the military and the bureaucracy

Gandhi had rightly pointed out to Stafford Cripps on March 27 1942 that "the document was an invitation to the Muslims to create a Pakistan but it was clear from his (Jinnah s) attitude wrote Cripps that his committee had already accepted the scheme in principle '

The British Government was confident that its intelligent and crafty move would succeed for the Congress on the one hand was a completely divided house and Jinnah on the other hand got a moral boost from his master

It remains to be seen wrote Amery ' whether in face of the external danger any of the Congress leaders can be persuaded to realise that the half loaf which is all that either we or the rest of India can give them is better than no bread Jinnah will be content to realise that he has now got Pakistan in essence whether as something substantive or as the bargaining point Further After all supposing that Pakistan does come off there will be possibly two Muslim areas the whole of the States Hindu British India (if that does not divide itself up!) and finally at least one important primitive hill tribe

Jinnah s attitude had remained recalcitrant after his disillusionment with the Congress He joined the Muslim League just before the first world war He joined the Muslim League because the Congress was getting too extreme it was going beyond the limits prescribed by law and Jinnah s constitutionalism could not tolerate this heresy In reality

Jinnah was afraid of the participation of the masses in the political process he wanted to keep political agitation confined to an elitist level There were strong indications that with the arrival of Gandhi on the Indian political scene the common people might surge up to participate in the decision making process

I have held Jinnah said in a press statement on June 22 1942 that Gandhi never wanted to settle the Hindu Muslim question except on his own terms of Hindu domination It is clear to those who understand Gandhi s language that he wants the British Government to accept that the Congress means India and Gandhi means the Con gress and to come to terms with him as spokesman of all India with regard to the transfer of govern ment to the self styled Indian National Congress and to keep him in power by means of British bayonets so that Hindu Congress raj can dominate the Muslims and the other minorities Jinnah was in a completely uncompromising frame of mind and preferred British raj to any other raj excepting Pakistan The resolution of the Working Committee of the Muslim League on August 20 1942 and Jinnah s press statement in Bombay on September 13 clearly indicated that he was not pre pared to accept any settlement short of Pakistan He told newsmen in Bombay that if the Muslim League were to decide – mind you I am not in touch with anybody – but I have little doubt in my mind that a very large body in the army will fall out and today almost 65 per cent of the army are Mussalmans And not only that I think you will

find the entire frontier ablaze Reading news papers that I get from other Muslim countries Afghanistan Iran Iraq lately Turkey and Egypt the entire Middle East right up to Ankara and Cairo are not only in full sympathy with the Muslim demand but they are strenuously supporting it He invariably repeated that all parties must agree and guarantee the right of Mussalmans to self determination and they should pledge themselves to give effect to the verdict of a Muslim plebiscite and carry out the partition of India accordingly

Perhaps the Congress leaders could not read the writing on the wall or were afraid to launch another struggle Their anxiety to be elevated to power without much sacrifice had made their vision hazy On April 23 1942 the Madras Legislature Congress Party presided over by Rajagopalachari adopted a resolution recommending to the All India Congress Party that to sacrifice the chances of formation of a national government for the doubtful advantage of maintaining controversy over th unity of India is most unwise policy and that i has become a necessary evil to acknowledge th Muslim League s claim for separation of India

At its Allahabad session AI CC had howeve turned down this resolution and passed a count resolution opposing any proposal to break u India Rajaji bade goodbye to membership of th Working Committee by issuing a press stateme on July 10 1942 I am convinced he said ' that the Congress accepts the principle of territor self determination proposed in my AICC resol tion we can make Jinnah and the League accept

and join the Congress in a united political front

Gandhiji was flabbergasted to find Rajaji supporting the vivisection of India Heartbroken he said Rajaji concedes Pakistan, but has Jinnah even moved an inch to discuss the matter with him? No For Jinnah s game is to bring pressure on the Congress and Congress pressure on the Government I cannot swallow the splitting of India I alone *know what pain the thought has caused me* Rajaji is an old friend of India What after all is Pakistan? What does it mean? Jinnah has rarely explained it The masses are duped Anarchy is the only way Someone asked me if there would be anarchy if the British go Yes it will be there But I tell the British give us chaos

Cripps arrived in India in early 1942 Simla—the summer capital of India in those days and now the State capital of Himachal Pradesh—warmed up with political parleys He held discussions with various political leaders He met Maulana Azad along with his secretary Asaf Ali on March 25 1942 The Congress *president* raised the issue of control of the defence forces under an interim government But Cripps had nothing new to offer He held it essential for the efficient conduct of the war that strategic and operational control should remain the responsibility of His Majesty s Government acting through the Commander in Chief He only agreed to include an Indian representative in the war cabinet Beyond this he maintained the same old position

Gandhi also met Cripps on March 27 1942 He naturally declined to accept the declaration on

account of 1) the provisions regarding the Indian States and 2) the question of accession or non accession of the provinces to the proposed Indian Union

On April 2 1942 the Congress Working Committee submitted its resolution expressing dissent from the Cripps proposals It suggested that a national government should control defence through a defence minister while the Commander in Chief should control the armed forces The Congress was however prepared to accept certain limitations on the normal powers of the defence minister such as control of the higher strategy of the war by the war cabinet The Congress hoped this resolution would pave the way for a settlement but the British Government was as adamant as ever

Cripps had an interview with Jinnah on March 25 1942 When he gave Jinnah a copy of the draft he found Jinnah was somewhat surprised because it met his demand for Pakistan Cripps wrote in his note that 'Mr Jinnah was mainly interested in whether those provinces would have an effective right to opt out of the proposed Indian Union if they so wished He explained to him his proposal that the legislature should vote on a resolution to join the Union and that if there was a majority of less than 60 per cent the minority should have the right to challenge a plebiscite of the adult male population Jinnah reacted favourably though he doubted whether 40 per cent was the right figure to apply to the minority

The Indian Communists role in the whole game is still inexplicable They advocated 1) Congress-

League unity and 2) aid to the war effort They supported the demand for Pakistan on the ground that every nationality had the right to self determination The resolution was passed by the enlarged plenum of the Central Committee of CPI on September 19 1942 and confirmed by its first Congress in May 1943 The Communists insisted that the 'freedom of India depends on the unity of the Congress and the Muslim League But this logic sounded queer The Soviet Government faced with a similar problem in its own territory never allowed any minority in the country to go beyond the point of secession particularly in the border areas The right to self determination of which the Soviet Union has been an ardent exponent was denied to its own people It is interesting therefore to study developments in the Soviet State itself

In 1903 the second congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party adopted a clause in its programme on the right to self determination for all nations forming part of the States Lenin himself said in a speech in May 1917 If Finland if Poland if the Ukraine break away from Russia there is nothing new about that Anyone who says he is a chauvinist He condemned Rose Luxumberg for opposing the separation of Norway from Sweden She held the view that this was merely a manifestation of peasant and petty bourgeois particularism while according to Lenin there is a democratic content in the nationalism of every oppressed nation and that in this respect it should be supported in spite of its bourgeois

character

Stalin seemed to be more realistic and pragmatic on this question than Lenin In his report on the national question in 1917 he admitted that the oppressed nations forming part of Russia had the right to decide for themselves whether they wished to remain part of the Russian State or to separate and form an independent State The all Russian party conference had therefore conceded that the right of all nations forming part of Russia to secede freely and form independent States shall be recognised

In 1899 the Austrian Social Democratic Party adopted at Brunn a national programme to divide the nationalities in the Austro Hungarian Empire into separate units each with its national autonomy based on cultural connexions that is on personal nationality and not on territorial contiguity Stalin criticised this programme as an absolutely unjustifiable substitution of national autonomy for self determination of nations Though he condemned such national autonomy he advocated regional autonomy

He also realised that as a practical policy national self determination or the right of secession was incompatible with the military and economic interests of Soviet Russia Stalin felt that the border areas around Russia were not in a position to defend their independent existence without the military and economic assistance of Central Russia just as Central Russia was not in a position preserve its military and economic
the assistance of the border re

to go back on her commitment in view of 1) economic development and 2) national security

Nevertheless the Soviet Union became a great exponent of self determination of the coloured peoples of Asia Self determination writes Lohia to nationalities loses all meaning in Soviet Russia it had abundant propagandist value in Czarist Russia Communism is partitionist only when it is not in power in order to weaken its foe in the shape of a strong nationalism When it can itself represent nationalism it ceases to be partitionist

When these political activities were going on Jayaprakash was in jail He was transferred from Deoli prison to Hazaribagh central jail in the province of Bihar Now the 70 year old Mahatma—more youthful than a young man—gave the call for struggle on August 8 1942 which has come to be known as the Quit India Movement The clarion call of the Mahatma sparked off a national war The country became a vast prison house and news of these events began to echo inside the prisons too Jayaprakash was restless for he had to fulfil the historical task for which he had been waiting In November 1943 he escaped from prison with five comrades by scaling down the prison walls With Gandhi in prison Jayaprakash now became the source of inspiration for millions of freedom fighters in India He went to Nepal established a guerilla underground headquarters and travelled all over the country kindling hope and mobilising the people

Jayaprakash became a legendary hero of the revolution as a guerilla leader Amery wrote to Linlithgow on May 27 1942 that Edward Thompson had informed the British Parliament about JP s guerilla activities in the Sunderbans

Jayaprakash was again arrested on September 18 1943 at Amritsar railway station and brought to Lahore Fort Once known as Shahi Quila (imperial fort) well fortified and surrounded with an evil atmosphere and with people who, to say the least were dehumanised having no human standards or values It was a veritable hell the distinguishing line between man and brute was erased here

'A *mulzim* (an accused) in the world outside is an ordinary enough creature but in Lahore Fort he is definitely a subhuman No human sympathy should be shown to him the sweeper or the bhisti should never speak to him no superior being such as a CID constable should show him any courtesy or talk to him as a brother creature or an equal

The *mulzim* should be kept under lock and key all through the day and night a sentry with rifle and bayonet must stand guard at the door which was barred bolted and heavily padlocked anyway When talked to the sentry must turn deaf or into a statue of stone but his ever awakeful eyes must follow faithfully every move that the animal made in the cage

This was Lahore Fort The young rebel underwent incarceration there for more than 16 months from September 1943 to the end of January 1945 It is a long story of interrogation and to[illegible] the

imperialist Government was out to muzzle his voice for ever His troubles began a little more than a month after his arrest in the form of interrogation He was taken daily to an office and made to sit there for varying periods of time For the first few days the hours were not long but their length gradually increased first from 8 a m to 5 p m then up to 10 p m to midnight and finally stretching over the whole day and whole night round the clock without sleep He was occasionally brought back to his cell but as soon as he dozed off he was taken back to the office This process continued for several months

In spite of this torture JP s spirit remained undaunted I was prepared he wrote to answer any questions that did not relate to my recent underground activities and as for a statement I had no more to say than that I was an enemy of the British Empire in India (not of Britain or the British Commonwealth) that I was working for my country s independence and that I would continue to do so till either the object was achieved or death intervened The mighty force of the British Empire could not shake his will his passion for the independence of his country was irrepressible It was dearer to him than life

Undaunted and undeterred he announced I am conscious of the argument that those who believe in violence as a political method as I do must be prepared to be forcibly suppressed

The British Government had lost all sense of proprieties in suppressing its political opponents There existed only an indistinguishable line between

the tortures practised by the fascists and those of the British A political revolutionary ' wrote JP, may be executed for his offence when found guilty by the established law but he may not be put to any torture for the *extortion of information* War is the deadliest most brutal and violent form of political conflict Yet a prisoner of war has certain rights and immunities which civilised society scrupulously respects The same person who would be most mercilessly bayoneted to death in the field of battle would be immune from ill treatment in the war prisoners camp and would receive such amenities as the standards of the countries concerned and his own status warrant

For Jayaprakash the question of violence versus non violence was not so important as the indepen dence of the country He practised what he pre ached A slave has no option but to break his chain He never felt afraid to say what he believed to be true for moral values were the nerve centre of his life They provided him with light and solace and guided his action The Congress leaders on the other hand were wavering between *non violence and violence They had lost all* scruples They followed the principle of non vio lence when it suited them Jayaprakash without being a Gandhian was more Gandhian in that he stuck fast to what he considered to be the truth and practised what he professed Most Congress leaders were Gandhian in profession and un Gandhian in practice Power was their ultimate goal a pattern of double standards their guide

The Congress leaders had accepted

of non violence for achieving independence and had promised to practise it in future When the war began they argued that there was a distinction between the struggle for independence and national defence non violence would be the method only for the former But when they were rebuffed by the British Government they reverted to the pretence of non violence and went to the extent of proclaiming that they would follow a policy of disarmament when India became independent For Gandhi non violence was a creed for others it was a policy Jayaprakash took the blame for violence upon himself The British Government was naturally interested in running down the movement Jayaprakash became its scapegoat it spat out on him all its venom and malice Its efforts however proved futile Jayaprakash stood the test successfully He set another example of moral stature by writing to the Chief Justice of the High Court of Lahore that he was not a member of the Congress Working Committee nor was he when he escaped from the Hazaribagh prison I am particularly anxious to correct this information he said as I do not wish the Working Committee of the AICC to be in any manner associated with my recent activities and views

Recalling the political events of the period when he was in prison Jayaprakash was naturally unhappy at the dilatory and ambivalent attitude of the Congress leaders Two basic questions worried him most one the Congress attitude towards the war and two the proposed partition of the country Rajagopalachari s statement came as a

rude shock to him In Lahore Fort he used to maintain a diary to give vent to his feelings How much torment he underwent and how restless he felt is evident from its contents

Let us take Rajaji at his word wrote JP India divided into two States? Even a high school knowledge of Indian history should enable one to forecast the result of such a vivisection of this country Vivisection obviously presupposes the existence of a widespread desire for separateness Given this desire and the fact of division and undoubted foreign influence of conflicting nature India would present a picture not essentially different from that which existed at the dissolution of the great empires of Indian history The only outcome of such a confused state would be cultural and economic backwardness political weakness and eventual subjugation again to a strong foreign power or to more than one power

The example of the Soviet Constitution which had granted the right of self determination to nationalities with a view to initiating the process of devolution of powers had often been quoted by many Indian leaders In fact it had given a boost to those leaders who argued in support of demand for the division of India But this was an illusion

First the recent Russian amendments wrote JP leading to decentralisation in Russia had not broken up the Soviet Union and divided into a number of independent States As for the *right to* secede it is an old constitutional guarantee *that* exists since Lenin s time" There is a *differe* however between the recognition of the r

separation and the actual fact of separation So far as the Soviet Union was concerned the nature of the State has always reduced this right to a nullity In India it was not that the Units prepared to join the Indian union sought to reserve the right to secede if they found cause to do so What was demanded was an outright separation and division of the country

Jayaprakash therefore emphatically stressed that there is a world of difference between the two positions the first presupposes a desire to stick together and make a serious experiment in joint nationhood while the latter kills the very possibility of union by immediate partition In every federal Constitution of the world where the right of secession is guaranteed it has a twofold basis while on the one hand it provides the ultimate solution of international conflicts on the other hand it rests on the ground that mutual goodwill and adjustment and the desire to pull together would ever make unnecessary the exercise of this ultimate constitutional right He expressed these views as early as 1944 when he was imprisoned in Lahore Fort He fervently hoped that the Congress would have no difficulty in guaranteeing this right to the federating units in India provided there was a genuine desire to stand as a united nation and to preserve national unity to the utmost extent possible The Congress would do this precisely in the hope and belief that the experiment in united nationhood would soon remove suspicion and cement the bonds that naturally exist among all the sections of the Indian people

He was anxious to build up a composite and united nationhood If a suitable basis was provided by restructuring our present socio economic system this might 'remove suspicion and cement the bonds among different nationalities he believed At the same time he did not rule out the right of self determination of course, with a proviso that its application should be limited and could be resorted to only as the ultimate solution of international conflicts He hoped that given the best possible solution this right would ultimately become redundant

This is the basic difference between Jayaprakash and Western thinkers Jayaprakash has a twofold objective 1) to build up a composite and united nation and 2) to provide a system within this common nationhood commensurate with the aspirations and needs of its people The Western concept of nationhood encourages separatist tendencies and ultimately sows the seeds of discontent and conflict

This does not mean that Jayaprakash was not aware of the Muslim problem The Muslim fear of Hindu domination of the central Indian government was genuine Jayaprakash suggested a two fold remedy One was to define carefully and limit the powers of the central government and vest the residuary powers in the provincial governments If minimum powers were left with the centre the possibility of its interfering with the provinces would be reduced to that extent The other problem was to ensure that the powers vested in the national government were so exercised

havoc was being wrought five British officers were in power and nothing could be done "I tried to get the District Magistrate of Gurgaon transferred he disclosed I could not succeed, and the officer there arrested leading Congressmen when they were not at fault and put them in jail as hostages

On 20 February 1947 the British made another declaration affirming their desire to complete the transfer of power not later than June 1948 This served as a green signal to the Muslim League and a wave of communal riots shook the country The London Times reported that Muslim separatism is deriving encouragement from the language of the white paper

The similarity of the pattern followed by communal riots everywhere confirmed the fear that there was a deliberate and well conceived plan behind them Hazara and Dera Ismail Khan—non Pushtu speaking areas in NWFP dominated by Punjabis—were ravaged by riots Colin Reid of the *Daily Telegraph* wrote from Peshawar Agent provocateurs from other provinces have been stirring Muslim feelings here by displaying photographs of skulls and torn fragments of the Koran—from Bihar

Reports were also forthcoming that some commandos who had been working behind the Japanese lines in Burma under Brigadier Wyngate were found enga ed in disruptive activity How they infiltrated into India was a mystery Brisk illegal traffic in arms going on with the connivance and somet ol
and I

open scandal Secret dumps of illegal arms including in one instance over a thousand sten guns were discovered at Nagpur Jabalpur Kanpur and several other places Later, the Congress High Command found documentary evidence of the complicity of the Political Department how in league with certain princes it was busy hatching a conspiracy to break up India s unity Among other things it brought to light a well laid plan to run in large supplies of arms through some of the States to organise a D Day all over India

When the Congress leaders were aware of this conspiracy of the British Government in alliance with the Muslim League why did they deliberately walk into the trap ? When they had no control over the army and the bureaucracy why did they agree to form a government? When Gandhi went on insisting that he would not accept a truncated India why did they accept the Cabinet Mission proposal? The answers to these questions reveal the state of mind of the Congress leaders

Nehru became Congress President on May 16 1946 and a month later the Viceroy invited him to form an interim government AICC met in Bombay in July 1946 to consider the mission s plan and approved the Working Committee s resolution by 204 to 51 The Congress was committed to participate in a constituent assembly consisting of members elected indirectly by the provincial assemblies which in turn were elected under the Act of 1935 by no more than 15 per cent of the people This means that 85 per cent of the people in the provinces had no representation

whatsoever in the Constituent Assembly Similarly the representation from the princely States was unrepresentative in character Out of the total of 69 members from them 28 were the nominees of rulers and 41 'elected These 41 were not elected in fact they were nominees of the Congress bosses who dominated the All India States People s Conference

Jayaprakash was not happy at Congress participation in the Constituent Assembly On July 12 1946 he made a press statement to that effect He also reaffirmed that his party members would not seek election to the Assembly Spearheading the *leftwing opposition he said* The *Constituent* Assembly is the creation of the British and it can never bring us the freedom that we have been fighting for years The British Cabinet Mission had not come to deliver freedom to India but to play the mediator between the Congress and the Muslim League The Constituent Assembly, as shaped by the British Government was not the outcome of the strength of the people

Nehru had deviated from his earlier stand on the Assembly From the beginning of the negotiations with the British he had been advocating a body elected on the basis of adult franchise and *his acceptance of the pattern prescribed* by the British Government came as a shock to his Socialist friends in the Congress

Jayaprakash suggested at a meeting of AICC that the Congress should prepare the country for another struggle for independence Achyut joined him in opposing the Working Committee s decision

How could the Congress he asked having agreed to enter the Constituent Assembly say that it did not wish to participate in grouping? The Congress Working Committee had said that they had accepted the clause relating to grouping with their own interpretation Jinnah had his own interpretation which was opposed to the interpretation of the Congress The correspondence published so far does not contain any evidence of the Cabinet delegation accepting the Congress interpretation of the grouping clause On the contrary the Cabinet Mission had made it clear that the Congress interpretation of the clause was not in accord with the intentions of the Cabinet Mission

Gandhi s sorrow knew no bounds I said in one of my speeches at Delhi that I saw darkness all around me I told the Working Committee that as I could not see light I could not advise them My mind today is dark as it was in Delhi There fore I will give the same advice to Jayaprakash I want you to accept or reject the resolution not because I ask you to accept it or Jayaprakash asks you to reject it or the Working Committee wants you to accept it He was speaking at the Congress session in July 1946

AICC met again in Meerut from November 23 to 24 1946 Moving a resolution on the Congress manifesto Jayaprakash held that the Committee rather than the Congress members of the Constituent Assembly were competent to decide the shape of *swaraj* in the light of the Congress manifesto For *swaraj* cannot be real for the masses unless

it makes possible the achievement of a society in which democracy extends from the political to the social and economic spheres and in which there would be no opportunity for privileged classes to exploit the bulk of the people nor for gross inequalities such as exist at present Such a society would ensure individual liberty equality of opportunity and the fullest scope for every citizen for development of his personality

Acharya Narendra Dev moved another resolution on the Constituent Assembly and this was seconded by Rao Saheb Patwardhan The resolution stated This Congress declares that it stands for an independent sovereign republic wherein all powers and authorities are derived from the people and for a Constitution wherein social objectives are laid down to promote freedom progress and equal opportunity for all the people of India so that this ancient land may attain its rightful and honourable place in the world and make its full contribution to the promotion of world peace and the progress and welfare of mankind and directs all *Congressmen to work to this end AICC adopted* this resolution unanimously But true to the tradition of a hiatus between precept and practice among Congressmen it remained on paper and has still to be carried out

AICC met again in New Delhi on September 23 to implement the decision of the Congress leaders to form an Interim Government Nehru reviewed the circumstances in which the Working Committee decided to enter the Government Jayaprakash condemned the policy of the Congress which led it

to join the Government

The Congress leaders said Achyut by their participation in the Interim Government were treading on very slippery ground At the AICC meeting of Bombay the president and other leaders assured the committee that the Congress was entering the Constituent Assembly without any commitment But later on they had to declare that they accepted the Cabinet Mission s statements in its entirety

He gave a timely warning that the administration of India should not be carried on with the help of alien troops who must be withdrawn He would prefer Hindus and Muslims to fight among themselves rather than keep foreign troops in India to maintain order

The Socialist leaders remained neutral on this question finding themselves in a dilemma The Congress leaders were seeking a mandate from AICC after they had formed a government JP therefore wrote that the resolution asked us to ratify the formation of the Interim Government We could not do so because from the beginning we were opposed to any settlement with the British Government at this stage The formation of the Interim Government was then a step in a process of settlement to which we were basically opposed The Government had already been formed and the Socialist leaders felt that the question of opposition did not arise at this stage Had that Government not come into being it was given to us to oppose its formation But having once been formed it would have been the height of irresposibility to

ask it to resign immediately

On July 27 1946 the League withdrew its acceptance of the mission s long term plan and called on August 16 for direct action to achieve Pakistan For the subsequent 18 months the subcontinent was plunged in bloodshed and riots The orgy of violence reached unprecedented heights and spread from Calcutta to Noakhali district of East Bengal and from there to Bihar It ultimately reached Punjab and NWFP

The British Cabinet released a statement on December 6 1946 saying There has never been any prospect of success for the Constituent Assembly except upon the basis of an agreed procedure Should a constitution come to be framed by a constituent assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented (i e the Muslim League) His Majesty s Government could not of course contemplate—as the Congress have stated they would not contemplate—forcing such a Constitution upon any unwilling parts of the country A few months before Attlee had said in the House of Commons that the minorities would not be allowed to veto the advance of majority But the latest declaration superseded Attlee s statement and gave a new lease of life to Jinnah s demand for Pakistan

The Congress leaders were locked with Jinnah in a two pronged battle—one at the level of wits and the other in the streets The League had decided to boycott the Constituent Assembly until its demand for Pakistan was conceded But it joined the Interim Government later to strengthen its

hand in pursuit of this demand It also took the struggle on to the streets in the form of violence and bloodshed The Congress leaders found themselves unable to cope with the situation as the British Government was supporting the League by making frequent policy declarations in its favour The Congress had earlier proved itself capable of giving an effective fight to the British Government now it was afraid to take the risk for power had become the overriding consideration Its leaders forced the nation to walk into a spider s web skilfully spun by the British imperialists

Nehru moved a resolution in AICC on January 6 1947 advising acceptance of the December 6 declaration Though a member of the Congress Working Committee Jayaprakash opposed the resolution He even offered his resignation from the Committee to the Congress President He held the view that the declaration would push the situation one more step forward to the ultimate acceptance of Pakistan

I feel distressed sometimes he said ' by the way AICC invariably sets the seal of approval on every decision of the Working Committee and I feel it may be a good thing if I resigned from AICC also If ever there was a time to disagree with the Working Committee it is now We have accepted decisions till now, but the time may come when we shall have to part company

The Congress leaders however rejected his plea on the ground that it would lead to a civil war This was however an imaginary fear On January 5 addressing a press conference in Lahore

Jayaprakash said 'I do not think that a revolution will lead to a civil war A civil war only comes when there is a fight for loaves and fishes But the Congress was steadily yielding to the pressures of the British Government and moving into its traps while the League was busy intensifying its demand for Pakistan The British Government held the strings—invisible but invincible—behind the scenes Disaster was inescapable for the Congress was not prepared to wage a struggle for independence Gandhi had led three successive struggles and now felt distressed at the performance of the Congress leaders

He said on May 31 1947 Even if the whole of India burns we shall not concede Pakistan even if the Muslims demand it at the point of the sword But as Brecher says ' those were mere words for power in the Congress now lay with Nehru and Patel

Gandhi was ploughing his lonely furrow The young Socialists in the Congress too felt disappointed The Congress leaders who in the 1920s and 1930s had displayed high spirits and determination to fight to death for independence now showed their feet of clay They declaimed loudly but showed only timidity and weakness in practice To achieve independence and at the same time retain India as a single unit was now a cry in the wilderness To capture power was the sole objective of these leaders

These developments had naturally started a process of rethinking among the Socialist leaders Jayaprakash prepared a small note for circulation

among his colleagues The phrase united front of all anti imperialist forces is meaningless to me today he wrote At the same time the slogan of one leader etc is foolish and totalitarian An independent Socialist Party of India based on democratic socialism should be formed Its members should not be members of the Congress but it should be friendly to it and till independence is won should seek to work in cooperation with it I have decided to leave the Congress and work towards the objective of democratic socialism

The sinners of Partition had combined in a trinity—the imperial Government of Great Britain, the Muslim League and the Congress leaders Hindu communalism was no less responsible To hold one leader more responsible than others is an exercise in futility They were all equally responsible

The process of nation building is not based on any rigid formula Nor does any single factor such as religion race language or ideology constitute nationhood The forces of nationalism are inherent in modern social life Several variables initiate help and build up the process of nationalism

The problem of nationalism has been a baffling one since nations came into being There have been two main trends of nation building in Europe Nations such as the French English Portuguese and Spanish were built by the political power of monarchies on more diverse foundations The concept of a nation was regarded as the result of a *vouloir vivre collective* and the product of a common consciousness and sharing common

ideas than from any racial linguistic or cultural inheritance But after the first world war it assumed a new meaning Emphasis was shifted to the nation state having nationality as the basis of statehood This change brought to the fore the question of self determination But this new concept appeared to be more politically motivated and dangerous to peace This was apparent from its application in the East European countries when the war was over The Western countries prevented the people of Asia and Africa from exercising this right but it was enforced in Eastern Europe The reason was obvious—a sinister design to weaken and destroy the main enemies of the Allies—Germany and the multi ethnic Austro Hungarian Empire in Central Europe According to a political scientist nine million lives were sacrificed by both sides in the war in defence of their national interests Around one key fortress on the western front Verdum casualities reached the figure of 65 000 killed eight times the number killed by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 Mao Tse tung once declared that in a third world war 300 million Chinese might perish leaving another 300 million safe to rebuild the Chinese nation swiftly

The USA remained lukewarm to his theory Abraham Lincoln said to be the father of American democracy faltered and in fact retreated from giving effect to this right in his country In 1848 he proclaimed that any people anywhere being inclined so and having the power have the *right* to rise up and shake off the existing governments and

form a new one which suits them better ' But he later changed his position and viewed the secession of the southern confederacy as inferior to the concept of the preservation of the Union Had not the right of secession of the South been decided on the battlefield there would have been two American federations existing today between Mexico and Canada

The same is also true of Soviet Russia Stalin held back Transcaucasian Tartars from seceding from the Soviet States Explaining the reason, he said the Transcaucasian Tartars with their minimum of literacy their schools controlled by the omnipotent mullahs and their culture per meated by the religious spirit It is not difficult to understand that to organise them into a national cultural union would be to place them under the control of the mullahs and to create a new strong-hold of spiritual enslavement of the Tartar masses by their worst enemy

The concept of a nation state is not only impractical it is also fought with danger It is loaded with dynamite Harold Temperly has rightly held that if self determination is pushed far enough not only every town but every hamlet has the right to vote itself out of a State of which it may have been a part for five centuries

Cobban has raised certain basic questions On what grounds can we justify the revolt of the American colonialists and condemn the southern secessionists other than those of success or failure? How can we approve the movements of the Czechs against the Hapsburg Empire and criticise the

secession of the Bohemian Germans? Why was it right for Ireland to claim independence from Great Britain, and wrong for the Ulster Protestants to remain free from Catholic Irish rule? Why should not the Catholics of Tyrone and Fermanagh break away from the remainder of the six countries? If the Muslims of the Punjab were to be emancipated from Hindu dominance are the Sikhs not entitled? *If self determination means this kind of* thing where and with what unit can the process possibly stop?

Yet Jinnah persisted in his demand for Pakistan He was a politician and not a saint He was an ambitious man How could he remain satisfied with playing second fiddle to the Congress leaders? The man described in 1919 as the ambassador of Hindu Muslim unity had now become implacably hostile to that idea Religion had never been the real reason for his separatist stance Between Maulana Azad and Jinnah the latter was more secular in every sense of the world But Jinnah became the founder of a theocratic State while Azad toiled all through his life to build up a composite nationhood

Communalism is a political concept *par excellence* To correlate religion with communalism is to ignore the essential nature of communalism It stems from deprivation a sense of exclusiveness insecurity and alienation If Deutsch s concept of social mobilisation is true man identifies himself with his community and finds in it an outlet for the expression of his sense of achievement This invalidates the age old elitist concept of

power Jinnah disagreed with Gandhi for Gandhi introduced mass participation in politics which baffled Jinnah He derived all his norms and values from the bourgeois liberal philosophy of the West

Two questions are as relevant today as they were before India became independent One has partition been able to solve the problem that was responsible for it ? Two is India now a nation ? For the first question the experience of the last 25 years indicates a dismal failure There have been three wars between India and Pakistan and peace in the sub continent is still elusive The persistent hostility between the two neighbours has affected their economies and internal set up There are still 70 million Muslims in India hatred and suspicions between Hindus and Muslims continues and the number of communal riots has increased in recent years As to the second question numerous problems have cropped up within India Besides communal riots there are caste and sect riots linguistic riots and sporadic riots on a large seale The young are on the rampage hijacking of Government buses raids on police stations and Government buildings are becoming normal features of urban life Mob-police confrontation is frequent today The Naga problem on the eastern border and Kashmir in the west the demand for autonomy by the Dravida Munetra Kazhagam in the south and West Bengal in the east threaten the unity of the country

The forces of nationalism do not derive their origin from a set of rigid patterns they arise from

the sense of exclusiveness and alienation In India there is a peculiar correlation between poverty and caste somewhat akin to that of the Black vis a vis the White in the USA Political power is also likewise the preserve of the higher castes

Shills counter periphery model of nation building and State formation gives a clue to the study of nationalism Men have citizens in larger proportions than ever before in the large States of history and probably more too than in the Greek city States at the height of the glory of their aristo cratic democracies

The bulk of the population in most pre modern and non Western societies lived in a sense *outside* society and did not feel its remoteness from the centre Their remoteness from the central value system was a blessing in disguise for they did not feel their low position in the hierarchy of autho rity or the consequent alienation The aliena tor was not active or intense But as soon as the man on the periphery began to feel a concern for this value system it soon set in motion the pro cess of alienation Several factors are resposible for this awakening Firstly the extended market has integrated the population into a more unified economy Secondly education through franchise and mass communication have greatly increased the participation of the people in the central value system Thus with economic development administrative and technological strengthening of authority political democracy urbanisation and education the different sections of the population have come into more frequent contact with each

other and created even greater mutual awareness

The central value system finds today a wider acceptance than in other periods of history At the same time these changes have also increased the extent if not the active dissensus or rejection of the central value system The same objects which previously engaged the attention and aroused the sentiments of a very restricted minority of population have in modern societies become concerns of much broader strata of the population

'The emergence of nationalism Shills points out not just the fanatical nationalism of politicians intellectuals and zealots but as a sense of nationality and an affirmative feeling for one s own country is a very important aspect of this process of the incorporation of the mass of the population into the central institutional and value system The more passionate type of nationalism is an unpleasant and heroic manifestation of this deeper growth of civility

Thus every society is confronted with the challenge of nationalism dormant or open As a natural and logical corollary not only the non participation of a periphery in the central value system builds up the forces of nationalism but the gap between the emerging values and an age old structure sets Lipset s theory of legitimacy in operation and thereby gives birth to a new nationalism The questions therefore arise 1) whether the periphery in India has at all been able to derive benefits from participation in the central value system and 2) whether the emerging values of egalitarianism and democracy have been incorporated

in the existing structure or the prevailing institutions have been suitably restructured commensurate with the emerging values These factors well explain the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan The logic of these factors is bound to affect India too if they are not replied to in the affirmative

An initial mistake was made when the Constitution of free India was drawn up The Constitution determines the structure of political organisation the quality of freedom and the outlines of social and economic life But the Constitution did not facilitate social change in the country although this was imminent Jayaprakash therefore pointed out towards the end of the 1940s that this draft Constitution would neither guarantee the freedem of people nor make social change possible The Constitution in its present form would be a bulwark of Conservatism and a powerful hinderance to full democracy The fundamental rights of the people have been so hedged in that this leads to near nullity the executive has been armed with such sweeping special powers as to encourage dictatorship bicameralism even in the provinces assures conservatism the guarantees regarding compensation for property acquired makes progressive economic policy too burdensome to be undertaken

He therefore set forth the twofold tasks before the country 1) to lay down the foundation for national unity by fighting against communalism and other separatist tendencies and 2) to build up a new social order and a new polity The second is more important since it provides the basis for

the first and would pave the way for national unity To confuse nationalism with religion is to over look the historical process of socialisation The question of nationalism is bound up with the social economic and political problems since new values have been set in motion by the release of new forces stemming from modernisation An appro priate answer to the challenge of nationalism is to be found in a new social structure embodying new emergent values rather than the formation of a new nation state

The Congress chose to follow the policy from the wrong end The Congress wrote JP has become a source of power and political advance ment Naturally vested interests have grown and are fast growing within it and with them corruption and jobbery The Congress elections beginning with enrolment to members have become a racket and self seeking and power politics have become rampant This rising tide of selfish politics is the greatest barrier today in the path of the Congress advancing towards socialism

Jayaprakash had undergone the bitter experi ence of power politics during the freedom move ment India s division had been perhaps a logical and natural culmination of power politics Gandhi too had advocated compromise and reconciliation with the Government but his approach was totally different from that of other Congress leaders He never shirked a struggle when he thought it fit to do so It were his allies in the Congress who were not prepared to go all the way with him

Is a polity based on power politics suitable

underdeveloped countries like India? There is a definite view that it is alien to this soil and suffers from several abuses The problem of corruption is one of them Today it is so widespread in India that it impedes the whole process of development Discussing this question in his book *Asian Drama* Gunnar Myrdal writes

When we observe that corruption is more prevalent in South Asia than in the developed Western countries we are implying a difference in mores as to where how and when to make a personal gain While it is on the one hand exceedingly difficult in South Asia to introduce profit motives and market behaviour into the sector of social life where they operate in the West—that is the economic sphere—it is on the other hand difficult to eliminate motivations of private gain from the sector where they have been suppressed in the West—the sphere of public responsibility and power Myrdal infers that in South Asia those vested with official authority and power very often exploit their position in order to make gain for themselves their family or social group This is so whether that position is the high one of a Minister a member of legislature or a superior official whose consent or cooperation is needed to obtain a licence or settle a business deal or the humble position of a petty clerk who can delay or prevent the presentation of an application the use of a railroad car or the prompt opening of the gates over the track

So Jayaprakash said that people interested primarily in self advancement do not worry much

is possible Anticipating these problems, JP voiced the need to create a real socialist party both ideologically and structurally grounded in the toiling masses of India But his concept of socialism was different from doctrinaire Marxism He wrote on January 30 1949 World socialism more so Indian socialism would hurt its own cause if it allowed dogmatism masquerading as science or orthodoxy to blind itself to the historic significance of Gandhi '

Speaking at a public meeting in Gujarat in 1950 he said I should like to state now as emphatically as I can that socialism in this country would neglect Gandhism at peril The conventional attitude of the scientific socialist is to brush aside Gandhi as a crankish old man who was so much out of date in this atomic age who was medieval reactionary and even an indirect apologist of vested interests The more sophisticated among them go forward and poke fun at his theory of trusteeship and sum him up as a class collaborationist The trouble is that the so called scientific socialist is seldom scientific More often than not he is just a bigoted phrasemonger Far from being reactionary Gandhi was a social revolutionary of an exceptionally original kind and he has made contributions to social thought and the methodology of social change that constitute imperishable contributions to human progress and civilisation

Jayaprakash showed signs of Gandhi s influence on his thinking in the late 1940s, after which his views gradually veered round to Gandhi s ideas of social reconstruction He differed from other

socialist thinkers on the nature of power politics the state as the lever of social change and Gandhi s insistence on policies based on moral and ethical values

Be it communism or liberal democracy, the process of alienation is in full swing and this phenomenon upset Marx because of its dehumanising effect on human beings He advocated communism in order to strike at the root of this evil but in reality communism further accelerated the process One is reminded of the biblical story God created man in his own image but he saw that wickedness of man was great and that every impulse in man s heart was evil Eventually the Lord must have been grieved that he made man at all Marx is unfortunately not alive to say as the Lord said I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth both man and beast and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air for it repenteth me that I have made them

After Congress took power in 1947 the question of socialism was relegated to the background Nehru expressed his dislike of isms Jayaprakash s plea of socialist goals was rejected because Nehru called it a doctrinaire approach For Jayaprakash the value of socialism was unalterably fixed and a long controversy ensued between Nehru and him On March 4 1953 he wrote to Nehru Whether we give it or not the name of any ism we all desire without the shadow of any doubt to create a new society in which there is no exploitation in there is economic and social equality, in there is freedom and well being for all

these goals for us or for that matter for any socialist are not to be achieved in a distant future but in the soonest possible time Those values and aims give direction and create sense of urgency which you will agree have been lacking in your policies

Nehru s answer was evasive and it did not indicate any commitment to socialism on his part ' You say he replied that the goals and values of socialism are unalterably fixed for you and you define these goals as the creation of a new society *in which there is no exploitation in which there is* economic and social equality Surely there is hardly any intelligent person in the world who will not agree with the goal on these values The question is how to proceed about it and there we come up against all manner of uncertain factors including the human material we work with I am inclined to agree with you that a sense of urgency is lacking in the country generally and in our policies also

To Jayaprakash however the above questions were crucial they are vital and important in respect of achievement of the goals of socialism He told the annual conference of the Socialist Party in 1948 that all politics is power politics was a disastrous point of view According to this theory he said the State becomes the only instrument of social good But he added The experience of totalitarian countries whether fascist or communist has shown that if the State is looked upon as the sole agent of social reconstruction we get nothing but a regimented society in which the

State is all powerful and popular initiative is extinct and the individual is made a cog in a vast inhuman machine He warned his party against the use of sordid and unethical means including means such as lying scandal mongering and cheat ing at party elections ' He suggested that one should be content to reach these positions by virtue of one s work and service done to the cause

He stressed this again on August 26 1951, in a letter to all the members of the National Execu tive He disagreed with his colleagues on whether all the prominent members and workers of the Socialist Party should contest the forthcoming elections He was of the view that at least one worker among them should be kept out from the election But many of the party leaders including Acharya Narendra Dev and Asoka Mehta did not agree with him He wrote One of the decisive items of difference in our view is that State power and initiative are not the only means of building up a democratic socialist society but that popular initiative and day to day effort are also essential indeed the latter are ultimately more important If we really believed in this parliamentary or governmental work should have had no more importance to us than the field work among the people If both activities are of equal importance why should all the important men be sent to the legislature? To believe further that the same persons can do both parliamentary and extra parliamentary work is to practise self decep tion If all the important men are sent to legislature the task of building up the

base and sanctions of socialism (except as agita tional appendages of parliamentary work) would be relegated to secondary importance He gave more importance to building up a popular base *than State power*

Speaking at a conference in Berlin in 1960 Jayaprakash said The monistic State poses problems that transcend the old ideologies of democracy and totalitarianism Whether govern ments are removable or irremovable by the electors the monistic State remains the sole centre of power in the society The issue therefore is not between democracy socialism fascism com munism etc but between the present monistic State and a State in which power and functions are dis persed and shared by other organisations of society

The emancipated individual has today become alienated anxiety filled morally insecure and lonely Regulation of the individual s life by intermediary associations was found irksome, but it has given place to the giant monistic State truly the leviathan Direct personal relation and participation have been replaced by their abstract anonymous and vicarious counterparts In the midst of giant and all pervading organisation there is disorganisation and disintegration of personal life

After independence however, India modelled its political and economic structure on the Western pattern This transplantation of a Western structure in Indian soil not only vitiated the whole process of *development in the country but also*

introduced all the evils of power politics such as the double standard in conduct

In a by election soon after independence the Congress leaders tried to cash in on the achieve ments of their party in the freedom movement to enlist support for their candidate against Acharya Narendra Dev who was universally respected as a scholar and one of the architects of the socialist movement in India Gobind Ballabh Pant then Chief Minister of UP said in a speech Every vote lost to the Congress will weaken the hands of Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel who are fighting against tremendous odds to stabilise the newly born independence It would demonstrate at the bar of world opinion that the Indian people have no confidence in the leaders who won them independence This will also have far reaching effects on issues like Hyderabad Kashmir and the UNO Commission and will weaken India s posi tion in international affairs

Patel said in a statement "I have never failed to emphasise that the watchword for the country today is unity and consolidation The Congress as far as I can see is the only organisation which can hold the country together If you disintegrate the Congress you disintegrate the country The Congress leaders were out to maintain their fort ress of power safe

Towards the end of 1948 Achyut Patwardhan was arrested for making a speech in Poona He was due to address a peaceful audience of about 3 000 people in a small town when a score of Con gressmen created a noisy scene to disrupt the

meeting Instead of stopping them the mamlatdar went up to Achyut and suggested that the meeting disband This was extraordinary behaviour for a custodian of law and order On Achyut s protest the official announced that he was promulgating Section 144 The crowd quietly stood its ground and Achyut refused to leave the platform On that he and his colleagues were arrested

When Jayaprakash became in 1947 the president of three important all India labour organisations namely the All India Railwaymen s Federation All India Po tmen and Telegraph Lower Grade Staff Union and All India Ordinance Factories Workers Union he encountered various suppressions from the Government In early 1949 the Railwaymen s Federation the Postmen and Lower Grade Staff Union and the Union of Post and Telegraph Workers decided to take a strike ballot Patel and K Santhanam then Minister of Railways accused Jayaprakash of exploiting labour for his own political ends Rebutting their accusation JP said I don t desire to impose a political party over the head of labour as the Congress or the Communists are trying to do I want rather the political party to grow in the manner of the British Labour Party out of the labour movement It is for this reason that I am advocating a change in the structure of the Socialist Party to allow the trade unions and peasant unions to control it rather than be controlled by it

The Ministers were advocating a pernicious doctrine alien to democratic government Santhanam held that in the political field democracy

could not coexist with direct action Jayaprakash retorted that violence is surely not compatible with democracy But peaceful direct action is not only compatible with it the whole essence of democracy is that it guarantees the right of the citizen to such action A strike is not an attempt to overthrow established society by violence rather it is a peaceful method of collective bar gaining Satyagraha too is direct action and democracy not only is not jeopardised by such action it is enriched and strengthened and purified by it It is a dangerous symptom that the new rules of the country are too intolerant to opposition even when it is democratic peaceful opposition

' In Mahatama Gandhi s method of civil dis obedience and satyagraha JP said the suppres sed and exploited have found a new technique that carries the struggle forward beyond the usual peaceful limits and gives full expression to the urge for sound justice and social change

While other Congress leaders resorted to all kinds of repressive action against the opposition Nehru maintained a facade of unity but he made no attempt to draw up a concrete programme to reconstruct Indian society When Tandon resigned in 1951 the party presidency it was expected that Nehru would make an effort to overhaul the whole organisation and reorientate it to the socialist movement Sardar Patel was already dead and the Congress was no longer under the pressure of rightist elements

In an interview with the *Times of*

June 13 1951 Jayaprakash said What the country needs is a national minimum programme drawn up by the Government and Opposition parties together and implemented collectively by them irrespective of whether or not they all share governmental power He cited fighting corruption communalism blackmarketing and food scarcity as examples of spheres in which the Socialist Party was prepared to cooperate with the Government and the Congress provided a programme was placed before the country Speaking at a meeting in Madras on February 19 1951 he said Let Pandit Nehru give us a programme and I will become the recruiting sergeant for him and recruit labour on a voluntary basis to implement the programme But why would the Congress leaders seek his support They were interested in the game of power politics for their own selfish end and a programme for social change was out of the question

Addressing a press conference in Kanpur in 1948 Acharya Narendra Dev criticised the Congress leaders for denying the need for healthy opposition Congressmen he said were engaged in power politics

In the early 1950s Nehru showed some keenness to meet Jayaprakash In June 1952 JP s 21 day fast and his convalescence in a nature cure clinic in Poona came in the way of such a meeting He had undertaken the fast because of the Government s failure to enforce its assurances to post and telegraph employees about the payment of wages for the period they had been on strike in 1946

though Jayaprakash explained in a statement that the fast was an act of atonement for his lapse in misunderstanding the decision of the Government The fast was not therefore directed against the Prime Minister or any member of his Government

The long awaited meeting between Nehru and Jayaprakash ultimately took place on February 1 1953 in Delhi You will remember Nehru wrote before the meeting that I have been trying to meet you for many months past This was no new urge due to any new occurrence Long before you undertook your fast I wrote to you and suggested that you might see me But this could not be arranged because of your fast and subsequent convalescence My desire to discuss these matters with you was not related to any new happening but had been present in my mind for a long time past It was obviously due to a feeling that we have big things to do in this country and we should approach them with our joint effort I feel that the next five or ten years are crucial in our existence I am satisfied if I may say so with the rate of our progress or advances I wanted to hasten it and I want your help to do so

There was much in common between Nehru and Jayaprakash in regard to their basic outlooks Both of them subscribed to the goals and values of socialism but there was a vital difference between them too Nehru was hesitant to enforce the objectives of socialism while the socialist leader was keen to enforce them as expeditiously as possible

' China and India JP wrote are

ntries in Asia to which all Asia and Africa are ...ing If India fails to present anything but a picture of a welfare State (which phrase I do particularly like Gandhi s and Vinoba s ...odaya is a far better phrase) I am afraid the ...eal to China would become irresistible and would affect the lives of millions and change course of history disastrously

He continued If a joint effort were made ...s great hopes were aroused and in the event failure—that is in the event of the people ...ing out that in spite of the join effort their lot ...ained unchanged—the frustration would be so ...plete that nothing could save the country ...n eventual chaos and disintegration The task ...ational integration of which you spoke the ...r day cannot be accomplished under static ...ditions If we move forward in new directions social and economic change the forces of ...gration would be vastly strengthened The ...tional and psychological climate that could ...reated should prove to be a powerful binding ...e

Jayaprakash offered Nehru a 14 point program as a basis of cooperation He suggested among ...r things the need for constitutional reforms ...ange in the whole system of administration ...olution of powers and decentralisation of ...hority legal reform and nationalisation in two ...eres namely banking and insurance and ...ing development of small unit technology and ...chines and the need for integrated and far ...ching agrarian reform

You have sent me replied Nehru a draft programme which includes among other things basic constitutional changes Now obviously it is not easy for me to bring about these things even though I may not be opposed to them You refer to all kinds of other changes of law and legal procedure and administration and reorganisation of the map of India etc To each one of these considered separately I have little objection and I would be happy to give thought to them But surely it is beyond me both as Prime Minister and as the President of the Congress to deal with such vital matters and give assurances in regard to them

The question of cooperation was thereafter left to develop by itself in the future The lack of joint effort and cooperation between these two great leaders adversely affected India s development

After 25 years of independence it is presumptuous to say that the entire country is now woven into a single nation In fact India is still going through the birth pangs of nationhood

Expectation of change has in recent years kindled new hope among neglected and weaker communities all over the world they are haunted by a new dream There can be dreams without hope but not hope without dreams It is therefore very important to appreciate the consequences of a wide gap between aspiration and actual achievement While hope is receding the dream tends to spiral upwards This hiatus threatens to disrupt the society

Does the solution lie in the formation of a nation state? This poses two important considerations one what would happen to the national security of India if for example the Nagas *opt for a separate and sovereign State? Two what* would happen to the development of the State if it is left to itself The population resources and geographical position of Nagaland being what they are independence in the sense of separation from India may not only immediately throw the Nagas back into near primitive conditions and severely arrest their future growth but also in view of the expansionist designs of China and its manifest ambitions in the area endanger its independence

Jayaprakash has therefore countered the question of independence with interdependence He holds that in the modern world there is no nation not even the greatest that is truly independent There is growing interdependence now more than independence Nations all over the world are moving towards regional unions of one kind or another *The advance towards a West* European union is an example

Preeminently interested in peace Japaprakash is aware of the dangers of a nation state which has wrecked the world twice in two major wars in the 20th century This does not mean that Jayaprakash opposes the right of self determination He has pointed out that the right of secession is a two way traffic while on the one hand it provides the ultimate solution of international conflicts on the other hand *it rests on the* ground that mutual goodwill and adjustment and

desire to pull together would ever make necessary the exercise of this ultimate constitutional right"

JP s proposals have been opposed by people who fear that a settlement on these lines would set in motion the process of balkanising India But these apprehensions are unfounded The fact remains that today the man on the periphery has become conscious of central value systems and this has intensified his sense of exclusiveness There are only two alternatives one is a social system appropriate to the needs and aspirations of the people and the other the steam roller of a nation state If the second course is followed the problem is complicated rather than solved JP advocates the first for peace and development of mankind

—BRAHMANAND

Origin of a Nation

THE QUESTION OF *national integration* has been much to the fore in recent years It is one of the highest aspirations—if not the highest—of the Indian people to become an integrated and strong nation There is a strong feeling in the country that our very future as a people would be brought into question if this task of nation making was not properly and speedily fulfilled

If becoming a nation is of such vital importance it behoves us to take a closer look at the pheno menon of nationhood First it has been found to be extremely difficult to define precisely what a nation is The word has a long history and its meaning has undergone a considerable process of evolution I am indebted to Fredrick Hertz s *Nationality in History and Politics* (London 1957) for what follows

Originally *natio* meant a backward tribe Civilised people as of Greece and Rome called themselves *gens* or *populus* At the beginning of the Middle Ages the word nation was used in Germany and France to designate the higher ruling class in opposition to the *volk* or *peuple* In former times the chieftain of an Irish clan was called captain of his nation The meaning of

the word gradually evolved in Western usage and came generally to refer to a free self governing people or a people constituted as a State

The definition, as will be seen is not entirely satisfactory because many States are composed of different nations or nationalities The Scots and Welsh for instance, regard themselves as nations though they live in a common State with the English Over 70 nationalities live together in the Soviet Russian State

In the long history of our country there is no word or concept found to correspond with the modern concept of nationality And this brings me to the second point I wish to make about the modern nation namely that whatever the long history of the world the nation in its modern sense is comparatively of recent origin

Some of the elementary traits of nationality writes Hertz may be as old as humanity but the more complicated phenomena have gradually arisen at different times While it is not possible to state definitely when nationality as we know it today was born it would not be wrong to say that the second half of the 18th century saw its first beginnings The 19th was *par excellence* the century of nationalism

The scene of this new development in human history was Western Europe Why should it have been so is not very clear For the present let it suffice to point out that it was not as if hum[illegible] society had to reach a 'higher stage of c[illegible] tion to give birth to the modern

India China and

brought forth great and comparatively homo genous civilisations but the idea of modern nationality was alien to them before they were permeated by European ideas In Europe itself Hertz goes on to say, ancient Greece or medieval Italy and Germany possessed very high civilisation while there was hardly any national solidarity between the different peoples into which each was divided A high level of civilisa tion was even adverse to national unity on a wide scale Athens, Florence and Nuremberg were *proud of the splendour of their own achievements* and looked down upon their backward kinsmen in other cities History shows that the progress of civilisation was often accompanied by a weakening of national sentiments

If then it was not the progress of civilisation that produced modern nations what were the forces that brought them into being? I shall presently examine this question For the moment it would be helpful to keep in mind that to be a nation does not necessarily mean to be terribly civilised Let us keep in mind that while civilisa tion is an end desirable in itself nationalism can only be a means to an end

Let us consider some of the common charac *teristics of modern nationhood and apply them to* our own Scholars have distinguished between legal and social or political nationhood or nationality The first is the objective and the second the subjective aspect of nationalism Legally or objectively considered a nation usually has three essential attributes a) a well defined

territory that it calls its own b) political unity represented by a common State to which all citizens owe allegiance, c) recognition by other nations and by international law as a distinct sovereign nation A legally defined nation might well be composed of a number of nations which in some respects consider themselves distinct from one another but yet accept willingly a common State

How a nation comes to be associated with a certain territory—and therefore with the corresponding State—depends upon a complex of factors often on accidents of history, including the accident of leadership The process is well illustrated in the case of our own nation Incidentally an examination of the process might help in overcoming the psychosis from which many in this country suffer as a result of partition

First of all let us remind ourselves that until the experience of British rule we were never a nation in the modern sense of the term Undoubtedly there was an indefinable unity in which our ancestors shared There was even the territorial concept of the land of Bharat Bharatvarsha which was bounded in the north by the Himalayas and in the south by the seas But that sense of unity so eloquently spoken by Rabindranath was not a nationalistic sentiment but a spiritual and cultural sentiment that was based upon a common outlook on life unity of spirit as Tagore called it and a common pattern of social living

It was only when British rule over the entire length and

that India was united politically under one government That political unity was however imposed from above and did not in itself constitute nationhood It was in the process of opposition to this imposed rule that Indian nationalism took its birth

An interesting point that might be raised here is whether the reaction to British rule would have been the same that is to say nationalistic in the modern sense if Great Britain had not been transformed meanwhile into a nation Is it not reasonable to suppose that if Elizabethan England for instance had conquered the whole of India opposition to it—successful or otherwise—would have followed the traditional dynastic pattern rather than the modern nationalistic one

Be that as it may Indian nationalism grew up as a reaction to aggressive British nationalism But unfortunately it was not strong enough to weld together psychologically all the people of India into one nationality The result was that almost on the eve of independence there arose a new concept of nationality which challenged the older one We all recall with a twitch of the heart that tragic clash between the two nation and one nation theories The two nation theory was undoubtedly ill conceived and ill founded because if the history of national origins and growth proves anything it is that religion alone never determines nationality

A combination of factors however conspired and India was partitioned But the two nation theory did not have an unqualified victory It had

proclaimed that the Hindus and Muslims were two distinct nations which must live separately in their own sovereign nationstates But in the event vast numbers of people belonging to these so called nations were left behind on either side of the partition In sober contemplation the partition of India would appear to have been a clumsy device which settled nothing and satisfied none If we add to that the holocaust the misery and suffering the moral degradation and debasement which followed it one cannot but be appalled at the historic folly

It is not however to lament a historical fact that I have brought up the question here My purpose is to demonstrate how a turn of history can be responsible for the delimitation of national territory and how there is nothing immutable or sacrosanct about it It is quite conceivable that partition could have been avoided even with the consent of all concerned and where there are two nations today there might have been only one

The role of events of history in giving rise to nations might be appreciated even better if we consider what might have been the situation if Britain or any other foreign nation had never established its rule over India and forcibly unified the country The Mughal Empire which in any case never extended to the whole of India was breaking up Marathas Sikhs Rajputs Tipu Sultan and lesser persons and groups were contending among themselves for

Can it be said with any

would have been today a single nation state in India or at any rate not more than two? Those who talk sentimentally about undivided India might give serious thought to this question and also not forget the fact that the political divisions and the struggle for power of those days rarely followed religious or communal lines True there did exist a degree of cultural unity in Hindu society at that time There was also it is true a discernible process afoot towards a cultural syn thesis between the Hindu and the Muslim ways of life But the history of Western Europe has shown that cultural unity does not necessarilv lead to a single nation state So while it is difficult to say with any assurance what would have happened if the British had not brought the whole of India under one government it is a sober ing experience to realise that undivided India would have been perhaps one of the lesser pos sibilities This thought should bring some solace to those who even now eat out their hearts over partition and consider it their patriotic duty to undo it

I shall go further and say that this thought should help cure that psychosis of which I spoke earlier—the hidden disease of the present day Indian mind compounded of suppressed pain anger and frustration that partition caused That pain anger and frustration could be sublimated if we took a healthy and realistic view of our historv and understood its true message and significance

Let me proceed now with the discussion of the characteristics of nationhood Experience has

shown that legal nationality is not enough A nation might have its State and well defined territory and yet lack the substance of nationality That substance is defined as national consciousness or national sentiment 'Without a sufficient measure of this consciousness says Hertz there is no nation When we speak of national integration in our own country we mean precisely the development of this very consciousness of nationality

But this consciousness or sentiment is an exceedingly elusive thing and whether or not a specific people possess it in sufficient degree is very difficult to determine It is a product of varied historical experience which is seldom the same for every nation It is therefore difficult to generalise and lay down prescriptions on how to develop national consciousness It would be interesting to quote here from Hertz two views of two distinguished Europeans on the question John Stuart Mill saw the essence of nationality in the mutual sympathy of its adherents and in their desire to be united under a government of their own produced through a community of history and politics and through feelings of pride and shame job and grief connected with experiences of the past According to Ernest Renan the great French philosopher and author of the famous *Life of Jesus* it is not race religion language State civilisation or economic interests that make a nation The national idea according to him is founded on a heroic past great men true glory Common experience leads

formation of a community of will

'More than anything else it is common grief that binds a nation together more than triumphs A nation therefore is a great solidarity founded on the consciousness of sacrifices made in the past and on willingness to make further ones in the future The existence of a nation resembles a plebiscite repeated every day

These are illuminating visions but they also show the complexity of the matter In the course of our long history much community of experience has been accumulated We shared much joy and grief pride and shame But apparently there has not been enough of it to create among us in sufficient measure a consciousness of nationality otherwise there would not have been such deep concern now over the question of national integration As a matter of fact there were elements in our community of experience which acted as barriers to integration and even led to actual disintegration as in the case of partition Moreover there are certain experiences such as sharing grief of glory which cannot be made to order

Before I proceed further with the question of developing national consciousness the most essential prerequisite of national integration I should like to turn to the question put earlier namely what were the historic forces which brought the modern nation into being? Nationalism is now a worldwide phenomenon and we see nations being born before our eyes as in Africa It was not through one and the same process however that they all came into existence

Broadly speaking the existing nations can be divided into two classes In one class would be those which became nations through an autonomous process that is to say as a result of forces which grew up within their own areas These might be called the orginal nations The other class of nations arose as a 'reaction to the original nations This reaction was of two kinds because it took place in two different sets of circumstances

In the older feudal empires such as those of the Hapsburgs and the Czars in which a ruling dynasty kept under subjugation different peoples the reaction was that of quickening of national consciousness which in turn expressed itself in a demand for ' national freedom The other type of reaction occurred among the colonial peoples the newly established nation states had conquered This reaction of course took time to materialise because the necessary conditions had to develop in the feudal and primitive societies before national sentiments could be born

The point I wish to emphasise here is that the growth of nationalism in both the old feudal and the new colonial empires could not have been possible unless the new phenomenon of modern nations and nation states had become manifest I am not suggesting that before that there used to be no reaction to conquest and subjugation My point is that in former days the reaction used to take the traditional form of dynastic opposition or that of just a people not a nation in the modern sense, rising against the conqueror or oppressor

How then did modern nationalism originally come into existence? To my mind it arose *mainly* on account of two revolutionary developments in Western Europe one the French Revolution the other the Industrial Revolution France and England naturally became the original models of modern nationhood The French Revolution was mainly a social revolution while the Industrial Revolution was mainly of a scientific cum technological nature The first laid down the political base and the second created the economic framework of the modern nation state

The French Revolution accomplished two revolutionary tasks it revolutionised totally the old concept of power and sovereignty and it carried out the new revolutionary concept dramatically into decisive section Until the French Revolution the accepted view at any rate in Europe was that both power and sovereignty resided in the king It was not possible under that kind of political ideology and system for modern nationalism to be born

Kings and nobles while they ruled over their kingdoms and principalities were rather cosmopolitan in their sympathies and outlook as Elie Kedourie has pointed out in his *Nationalism* (London 1960) and though they often fought among themselves they were tied to one another by marriage and traditional feudal ties The people over whom the princes ruled were so kept out of the politics of the day and were therefore so apolitical that they just could not come to acquire national consciousness which is a politi

cal sentiment

The French Revolution completely changed all that It proclaimed that power and sovereignty resided in, and were derived from the people More important than that it demonstrated that the people could assert their sovereignty and overthrow the power of kings and establish their own The people were thus drawn into the vortex of politics and came to be closely associated with the State At that point the feudal State began to be transformed into a nation state and the people into a modern nation The economic forces that the commercial and industrial revolutions had simultaneously set in motion completed the process They had indeed contributed in no small measure to the political revolution itself It need hardly be pointed out that the economic and political forces constantly act and react on each other, and only for the purpose of analysis can they be separated

The Industrial Revolution created a fairly large middle class which found it necessary to use the established State directly or indirectly to protect and expand its economic interests This further strengthened the association of the people with the State It was soon found that the economic interests of the new industrial commercial class was distinct from the interests of other States and their peoples. The cosmopolitan or at any rate extraterritorial outlook of the feudal ruling class came in time to be replaced by a narrow nationalistic outlook While the industrialism brought into being narrow

ism within the national territory it helped erase parochialism and localism The second process was of vital importance to the growth of the modern nations Thus the exigencies of history which determined the territorial limits of a nation and the political and economic changes brought about by the *two revolutions together* created modern nationalism Undoubtedly other factors played a part but not to my mind the same decisive part that these three played In fact the first factor the exigencies of history would include many other factors as I have already pointed out

What has already been said should be enough to show that it is not such a wonderful thing to be a nation as is usually imagined If a balance sheet is drawn the following would be the credit and debit sides respectively

1) *Uniting or integrating force tribalism rural ism merged into nationalism*	1) *Divisive forces have sharpened divisions between one nation and another*
2) Growth of civil society inside	2) Intense hostility towards other nations and internal wars
3) Growth of equality—economic social political etc	3) Exploitation conquest etc of one nation by another

Let us look at our task in this perspective Two of our great teachers and leaders—Tagore and Gandhi—have given us a *vision of nationalism* that is based on that *unity of spirit* which makes of the entire human race one single nation of man

Requisites of Nationhood

NATIONHOOD IS A rather recent social pheno menon The modern nations are hardly more than a couple of centuries old None of them was created in a day The process of national integra tion was rather protracted and not infrequently included phases of civil war In the modern sense of the term India was never a nation, nor is a nation today, nor can suddenly become one tomor row The process of integration will take time here as elsewhere It might be shortened by wise leadership or bedevilled by narrowness and stupidity

Nationhood is made up of tangible and intangible elements, the latter constituting much the larger part of it The most essential tangible ele ments of nationhood are

a) a well defined territory
b) political unity represented by
   i) a constitution (written or unwritten)
   ii) a common citizenship,
   iii) a government with authority over the entire national territory and power to deal with other nations
c) In multilingual nations a workable medium or media of communication between the consti-

tuent units

The Indian nation has all these elements though in respect to c) the situation is in the natural process of evolution

The intangible elements however really make of nationhood These elements may be expressed in terms of attitudes of mind as below

a) an attitude of mind which makes it natural and normal for every citizen to regard loyalty to the nation as being above group or sectional loyalties

b) an attitude of mind which makes it natural and normal for every group or section of the nation to subordinate its interests to national interests,

c) an attitude of mind which makes it natural and normal for the nation to think of the interests of every citizen and of every group and section of the nation

National integration would mean in substance the creation of the above attitude of mind These attitudes are largely absent at present

There is no single or simple answer to the question how these psychological requisites of nationhood can be produced Different approa ches will have to be made from different sides The statement of the National Integration Conference emphasises some of those approaches I am sure there will be many others The process as I have said above will be long and arduous

As matters stand there is one serious obstacle to the process of psychological integration In a vast country like ours with so many diversities it is natural that there should be all manner of disputes discords and differences We would be more than

human if it were not so Even among the peoples of well integrated nations there are internal differences and disputes political, economic, social, racial religious linguistic etc Even among blood brothers misunderstandings and quarrels take place If the condition precedent to national integration is complete harmony and accord among all individuals, groups and sections making up the Indian nation we might well have to wait until doomsday

I do not mean to suggest that the existence of disputes and discord is a matter which should not receive serious attention, and that every effort should not be made to settle them Nor do I mean to say that they do not obstruct the process of integration But I do wish to stress that it should be remembered that even after the best efforts disputes and the like will remain When differences occur in a small family a vast family of 550 million cannot conceivably be free from them

It is not the existence of disputes and quarrels that so much endangers the integrity of the nation as the manner in which we conduct them We often behave like animals Be it a village feud, a students organisation a labour dispute a religious procession a boundary disagreement or a major political question we are more likely than not to become aggressive, wild and violent We kill and burn and loot and sometimes commit even worse crimes When an Indian does such things to another Indian the psychological integration of Indians becomes a rather distant dream When brothers quarrel and decide peacefully to separate

they still remain brothers But when they quarrel and draw out their swords and strike each other their brotherhood is at an end

Likewise when Indians kill Indians and burn and loot the resulting hatred suspicion and ill will create a psychological estrangement which makes it difficult for them to feel that they all belong to one another as citizens of the same nation On the other hand no matter what and however serious the quarrel if every citizen takes a vow never to resort to violence the mere fact of the quarrels and disagreements will not do so much damage to the process of integration

Following this line of thinking I proposed on behalf of the Sarva Seva Sangh to the National Integration Conference that a campaign which might be called the citizens peace pledge campaign should be launched under its aegis to obtain signatures or thumb impressions on a pledge to keep peace In that connection I also pointed out that while there was a good deal of talk in the country about nonviolence we had far to go to establish a civil society

A society of nonviolence is far more difficult to achieve than a civil order of society Nonviolence requires the elimination of inequality and exploitation and the positive quality of love as the basis of social relations A civil society is chiefly distinguished—though it has other characteristics too—by general acceptance of the rule that disputes between individuals or groups should be settled by peaceful means Thus the peace pledge campaign would also help us forward towards the

goal of a civil order of society

The Sarva Seva Sangh had suggested the following pledge

> I, as a citizen of India affirm my faith in the universal principle of civilised society namely that every dispute between citizens or groups or institutions or groups of citizens should be settled by peaceful means and in view of the growing danger to the integrity and unity of the country I hereby pledge myself never to resort to physical violence in the case of any dispute whether in my neighbourhood or in any other part of India

I have been asked whether merely signing a pledge would prevent people from committing violence The answer is obviously no But there can be no doubt that a nationwide campaign of the kind in which all party leaders and leaders of other walks of life join cannot but create a powerful psychological climate which will have great educative value

I suggest further that we might copy the Independence Day programme of pre Independence days It will be recalled that on January 26 every year the whole country celebrated Independence Day when the pledge was taken in tens of thousands of meetings all over the country The practice was for the president of the meeting to read the pledge and the audience would follow him It used to be rather impressive and effective

It is sometimes asked who will do all this colossal work This question is symptomatic the decline of public life and activity after

pendence I am sure there will be no dearth of volunteers if a proper lead is given and the required psychological climate created If the leaders of the political parties took this up seriously there would be thousands of workers more There are the village panchayats and the panchayat samitis there are the schools and colleges there are the numerous voluntary organisations of every kind It should not be difficult for all this tremendous force to be organised and galvanised for this great national service

Danger of Nationalism

THE GROWING HABIT among us of imposing our views on others is not conducive to democracy Though we have accepted a democratic constitution and a democratic governmental set up most of us are unaware of the significance of these institutions

A democratic way of life means tolerence of other people s opinions which must receive full and free expression Otherwise true democracy cannot function Some people all over the country are constantly trying to prevent me from expressing my views and while they deny me the right to speak out for myself they themselves are making all kinds of propaganda to turn my countrymen against me

Of course I don t want to give this undue importance as I do not really believe that anyone can stop me from doing what I feel I ought to do I have decided to serve my country in my own light till my last day and this I will do even if it costs me my life or even if everybody forsakes me And for this cause I shall not flinch from telling the truth as I see it

I request you to dwell dispassionately [illegible]e problems which face us today

that two courses are open to us today the one that was shown by Mahatma Gandhi and Guru deva Tagore and the other that of Godse the murderer of Gandhi Will you pause and think for once which one you are going to follow I asked students at a Bangalore meeting the other day Unfortunately a very few among us today believe in a course shown by Gandhiji and the atmosphere is charged with hatred and violence

I must warn you that if these few sane voices don t raise their united protest now it will soon be too late because fascistic tendencies are growing very fast indeed

I was reading Gurudeva s *Nationalism* once again and I was amazed by the breadth of vision that he showed decades back He realised clearly that the aggressive nationalism which he saw in all the Western countries then was spreading disaster for the human race and therefore visualis ed a way out of this vicious atmosphere in the acceptance of internationalism as a higher goal He abhorred chauvinism and jingoism and preached world brotherhood

Mahatmaji used to say I am a nationalist but my nationalism is neither narrow nor aggres sive We are living in a time when nationalism as we practise it creates more problems than it solves

Think over the problem of national integration too The two biggest communities in India the Hindus and the Muslims have been living side by side for centuries now What must we do to solve the conflicts which so often take place between

them? Adoption of a secular and democratic Constitution is only one step towards the solution of that problem The letters of the Constitution have to be made real in our life I come from a State where the evils of casteism are more rampant than communalism We have so many kinds of conflicts within the Hindu community itself another example of which is the conflict between Brahmins and non Brahmins

We are far from achieving that integrity and unity which is the ideal of our nationhood These fundamental problems cannot be solved through excitement shouting of slogans or fighting among ourselves It is a nation building task which needs constant persuasion and infinite patience it needs idealism as well as self sacrifice If our life is demanded for this ideal we have to give it as Mahatmaji gave his Harmony is bound to prevail if we are ready to give sincere thought and effort to solving the communal problem

But to be able to solve the problem we must face the truth squarely and coolly We should not delude ourselves with fiction If you put the newspapers of Delhi and Karachi side by side and read them you will think the world has gone mad Both sets of newspapers are warmongers and each is constantly blaming the other for this We always delude ourselves with the thought that the source of all our conflicts is in Pakistan and communal riots start here only as a reaction to Pakistani aggressiveness **But what a the reaction in Pakistan to happenings here?**

I was against the partition of

the very beginning Our socialist group and myself tried to prevent partition till the last day though almost the entire country wanted it I mention this today because I want to remind you that this is not the first time I am standing against current opinion Partition however took place and from the very next day I felt it my duty to bring two parts of this truncated continent as close to each other as possible I sincerely believe that destiny will bring us together and the peace and prosperity of these two peoples who are in fact the same people lie in constant cooperation Such cooperation will be possible through a confederation or some other political organisation But neither government is ready for it now and the majority of the people in both countries are incapable of thinking in these terms

So the time is not ripe yet and we have to create the preconditions for such developments As I talk of the reunification of the two peoples I remember that the Hindu Mahasabha also has a similar aim But do you think the means which they propagate will bring the subcontinent together?

I am nationalist in the sense in which Mahatma ji or Gurdev was though I am not fit to touch their feet I feel that enlightened national self interest demands that we come to terms with Pakistan Today all the world is talking of peace and can t we talk of peace with our nearest neighbour? We cannot safeguard our national interests by following the wrong path Why are we creating war hysteria instead of preparing our people for peace?

An anti nuclear armament conference was held lately At that time one of the foremost peace leaders of the world was discussing the prospects of peace with our late Prime Minister He said the world was spending billions of dollors for research on the means of war but why was not a single penny being spent for research on peace? Does any government give any thought to this immensely more vital need?

We are living in constant fear of China and Pakistan and spending a vast amount of our resources in preparation for war Should not we rather give more thought to the possibilities of fostering peace through international organisations? Because our relations with Pakistan are bitter whenever anything happens in Pakistan we take revenge in important rage on our fellow countrymen and weaken our own nation In no condition should the atmosphere in this country be charged with so much madness that a section of Indians should burn the houses or rape the women or strangle and throw into fire the babies of another section of Indians If we want to live a healthy and civilised life we must get rid of such blind communal passion

Some people tell me that however much I try I shall not be able to change the heart of Pakistan because Pakistan was born in hatred and because it is to Pakistan s interest to have constant friction with India But I do not believe this reading of Pakistan s attitude to be [illegible]eat faith in the new generation [illegible]p in both countries I am sure [illegible]ed

by medieval passions in this age of science and technology and revolutionary socio economic ideas

I am a humanist and I trust in human goodness Can I accept that hatred and bitterness are the real feature of Hindu society? No, the truer picture of our society is obtainable in attempts like this for fostering peace and amity If we want to give this effort a sound foundation we have to start with a programme of re education of our people in the ways of love and sympathy I believe this to be possible Let the scope of this work enlarge every day and let us gradually realise our great Indian self in which there is tolerance and love for every human being

The Indian Nation

FOR THE UNDERSTANDING and promotion of Indian unity or national integration it is first of all neces sary to clarify the concept of Indian nationhood In the long struggle for national freedom there emerged a clear enough concept of a single composite nonsectarian Indian nationhood But the fact that there also emerged at the close of that struggle a rival concept based on Mohammed Ali Jinnah s two nation theory—a separate Hindu nation and a separate Muslim nation resulting in the division of the country and the establishment of an Islamic state—clouded the freedom move ment s concept As was only to be expected the two nation theory was not slow particularly after partition in strengthening in this country the cry for a Hindu nation which had in fact already been raised at the time of the freedom struggle

Certain other factors which have contributed to this development need to be understood First though the Hindus are in an overwhelming majo rity in this country they still suffer from the psy chology of a minority This is because the Hindu community is divided owing to the caste system and untouchability and the Hindus though in majority lived for centuries under the rule of non

Hindu minorities chiefly Muslim and Christian, who originally came from outside India Given the minority mentality it is not difficult to see why the slogan Hindu Rashtra' should be appealing and attractive to them

Second while it was easy in the freedom struggle to appreciate that success required the joint effort of all communities thus promoting the con cept of a single composite nationhood after independence there was no such compulsion left particularly as increasing numbers of the majority community began to be persuaded that being in an overwhelming majority they could easily impose their will on the minority communities

How dangerous this concept of nationhood could be in spite of its attractiveness to immature minds not only for the unity of the Indian nation but also to the Hindu community itself because of its deep divisions is little realised by the protago nists of Hindu Rashtra They also fail to realise that just as the goal of national freedom required the joint effort of all communities so does the present goal of national strength and national development

The Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh is the main protagonist of Hindu Rashtra It is reported to have said in a resolution that a well consolidated Hindu society which rose above all differences of caste, sect party or language could alone form a firm base for real national integration There can be no objection to the consolidation of any community provided this does not lead to a sepa ratist mentality intercommunal alienation commu

nal politics and domination of one community, no matter how large over another

It is difficult to understand what the RSS executive means by a well consolidated Hindu society rising above *party* If it means that Hindus by virtue of being Hindus should all belong to a single party this is a very dangerous thought which recalls to the mind the pre partition slogan—*Gar tu Muslim hai to Muslim League men aa* If in this manner every community were to have its own exclusive party and politics national unity would become an impossibility

It should be noted that there is also a strong movement among Muslims led by the Jamaat e Islami aiming at consolidating the Muslims not only as a separate religion but also as a social and political community The next natural step can only be the assertion of a Muslim nation Similar developments are bound to follow in every other sizeable community of 'Hindu Rashtra' and not Bharatiya Rashtra becomes the goal of the pre dominant Hindu community

If the people of India with their many diver sities are to become an emotionally united nation able to preserve and strengthen their political unity they cannot but deliberately and under standingly choose the ideal of a composite non sectarian nationhood and work actively to that end The task is to clear away all mental cobwebs and give a bold and unambiguous lead in this regard

There is a view that the sages and savants *smritikars*

and artists statesmen and warriors comprise really the warp and woof of our national heritages and provide the real basis of India s national one ness In this sense India is an ancient nation and it is fallacious to regard it as yet a nation in the making

The confusion here is between the cultural unity of a people and their political unity Despite the fact that the people of India from the Himachal to the Setu have shared for centuries (with local variations) a common cultural heritage they very rarely belonged to a single political State Nor is this a peculiarly Indian phenome non Elsewhere too such as in Europe or in the Arab world cultural unity has coexisted for centuries with political disunity

Our central concern at the present moment of our history is to ensure that the political unity established by the Constitution should be made firm and enduring Events have shown that even those sections of the people who share India s ancient heritage have not hesitated when aggrie ved whether rightly or wrongly to harbour even proclaim secessionist sentiments It would there fore be wrong to think that the task of moulding a modern nation out of the diverse elements of Indian society has already been completed by the achievements of our savants and sages

There is another view which considers the sense of belonging to India s historic past and of being with all those who share that past an essen tial qualification of a true Indian national National integration according to this view, mainly consists

in inculcating this sense of belonging and identity There is no doubt that those for instance who think that Indian history began with the first Muslim or Christian invasion and who feel no attachment to the India of earlier times lack the deeper emotional qualities an Indian national is expected to possess It is interesting to notice that as modern nationalism develops in such ancient lands as Iran or Egypt the Iranians and Egyptians despite their history are rediscovering themselves in their ancient glorv

At this point it is also necessary to bear in mind that our national heritage includes not only what has come down to us from ancient times but also what came later There has been in this country from times immemorial a commingling of foreign cultures and races with indigenous ones In the case of the later arrivals such as Islam and Christianity when political adversity drove Hindu society to defensive devices the commingling was much slower

Nevertheless Indian Christians and Muslims are very much Indian in their blood appearance ways of life caste attitudes (whether for good or ill) language (even Urdu is very much an Indian language) literature and other arts thought and philosophy material culture Even their religions have come to acquire a quality of Indianness In their turn they have also had a profound influence on Indian philosophy science literature, music architecture painting and the religious teachings of the medieval saints

The point to emphasise here

our national heritage is a very complex affair and includes all we have inherited not only from the past millenia but also from the past centuries of our history It is not only a question of Muslims and Christians and others with religions of foreign origin accepting India s ancient part as a part of their national heritage but also of Hindus and others of indigenous religions accepting India s medieval and recent past as a part of their national heritage There may be much in the two periods that each may reject but by and large all Indians must accept the totality of Indian history as their own

To avoid possible misunderstanding it should be added that feelings of identity with a country s past do not at all imply blind acceptance of or admiration for all that belonged to that past It should also be stressed that the kind of emotional identification discussed above is a delicate process requiring patience mutual respect and under standing and accommodation Any attempt to hasten the process by force or intimidation can only produce further alienation and national disruption

An all inclusive Indian nation is fundamentally different from a Hindu nation Protagonists of each will necessarily follow different roads to national unity Protagonists of the first concept would look upon all citizens of India irrespec tive of religion language etc as sons of the soil while protagonists of the other (such as Mr Golwalkar) would consider only Hindus sons of the soil and treat Muslims and Christians as

aggressors

It would therefore be a very valuable contribution to clarify this issue Continued ambiguity regarding it and the failure of the secular parties, who together form an overwhelming majority of political opinion in the country to face this issue have left the field unchallenged to the protagonists of 'Hindu Rashtra and Muslim separatism causing grave danger to the unity of India and the character of the Indian nation

Secularism on Test

IMPLICIT IN THE foregoing discussion on the concept of nationhood was the issue of secularism By its very definition Hindu Rashtra as conceived by its advocates is anti secular because it considers Hindus alone sons of the soil that is to say first class citizens On the other hand Bharatiya Rashtra is disruptive of national unity because any attempt to impose a second class status on non Hindus must lead to endless internal strife and ultimate disintegration

Indeed, as pointed out in the previous section it is doubtful whether in view of differences of caste and creed and the scourge of untouchability any attempt to build a Hindu nation on a communal and religious basis would not result in greater disruption of the Hindu community itself To sum up in view of the nature of Hindu society as also of the multi religious and multi-communal nature of Indian society secularism in national affairs is an inescapable requirement for national unity

As the term secularism is given a variety of meanings it is perhaps necessary to indicate the sense in which it is used here in the context of national unity Secularism has often been equated

with anti religion, atheism and materialism It is obvious that in these senses it has no relevance to the unity of the Indian people who are deeply religious In the context of unity secularism should have as broad a meaning as possible so as to be generally acceptable to the people

In this broad sense secularism has to be considered in relation to the State and to social life generally Happily the fathers of the Indian Constitution took care to base the Indian State on secular principles even though the word *secular* does not appear at all in the Constitution

A brief note on 'Secularism under the Indian Constitution by M C Setalvad describes the outlines of the Constitution s secularism It would appear from this that while the Indian State is not as rigorous as the American State which in Thomas Jefferson s *phrase raises ' an impassable wall* between religion and State it is more strictly secular than the English State which upholds an established church to which among other things the sovereign must belong

The Indian State has no official religion and maintains a benevolent neutrality towards all religions But at the same time it reserves to itself the right of legislating about all secular activity associated with religion as also the right to legislate for social welfare and reform even though such legislation may interfere with religious beliefs and practices

The protagonists of Hindu Rashtra denounce the secularisation of the State It is relevant therefore to point out that in Hindu ... tical

thought and practice State and religion were always kept apart As Setalvad avers The Hindu State so far as we know never attempted to impose a particular religion upon its people Various creeds were permitted to practise and even propagate their faiths build their places of worship and live in their own way There are no traces in Indian history of the struggle for freedom of conscience which prevailed in Europe for many centuries

It is an undoubted fact that in India religious and philosophical thinkers were able to enjoy perfect, nearly absolute freedom for a long period The freedom of thought in ancient India was so considerable as to find no parallel in the West before the most recent age All authorities I believe are unanimous on this point This incidentally shows up the claim of the Hindu Rashtra fanatics who aspire to establish Indian polity on the basis of Hindu culture

The fact that in traditional Islam religion and State are inextricably linked makes it difficult for the Muslim community in India to adjust itself to a secular State Indeed the traditionalists among them seem to be prepared to go so far as to want the Indian State to be transformed into a Hindu State under which they would advise their co religionists to live as *mlechhas* or *shudras* It is interesting to note how at the extremes the Hindu and Muslim communalists meet and reinforce one another This perpetual division of the nation as preached by them into Hindus and Muslims not only as religious but also as political communities

erects a permanent and impassable barrier to national integration

Fortunately the realities of the modern world and the requirements of the scientific and technolo gical age have caused a considerable disengagement between religion and State in some advanced Muslim States the effect of which will no doubt be felt upon the Muslims of India But far more important is the question how far the Hindus will succeed in preserving the secular character of the State Happily again the advocates of 'Hindu Rashtra are a small minority and are often apolo getic about their ideas which they try to smuggle into the heart of the Hindu community under false pretences such as anti Muslim propaganda and onesided often false history

As for the other religious communities the issue of State and religion does not present much of a problem For the Christian community the issue was settled long ago as a result of the pro longed struggle in Western Christendom between church and State and the ultimate bifurcation of the two differing only in degree in different Christian societies In Sikhism the Akal Takht a religious institution was no doubt a source also of supreme political authority but except for the extreme communalists it is doubtful whether any appreciable section of Sikh opinion now advocates the subordination of the State to religion By and large the Sikhs do uphold the secularisation of the State This is equally if not more true of the other religious communities in the country

As regards the application of secularism

social life generally the situation in the country is not as satisfactory as in respect of the State This is due to the decline of true religion and the ascendancy of empty formalism even of obscurantism It is also due to the economy of scarcity in which jobs and other economic opportunities are scarce in relation to competitors This competition finds it convenient to take religious communal (as also caste communal) forms which largely explains why so many of the educated are fiercely communal both in the religious and caste sense

It is not enough that the State should be secular for national unity but also that social life outside the proper field of religion should be secular This has implications both for religious and nonreligious aspects of social life Three main implications may be emphasised here a) the individual in society while adhering to his religion and considering it the best should respect other religions and practise tolerance and understanding towards them b) social life in its nonreligious spheres should be governed by rational ethical and human attitudes rather than by creedal and communal considerations and finally c) religious practice itself should discriminate between the essentials of religion and its excrescences such as human sacrifice (as in the recent case reported from Rajasthan) untouchability and belief in high and low castes as still widely practised in Hindu society and polygamy as said to be sanctioned by Islam and similar social and moral evils superstitions etc which are considered part of religion

Indian society is by and large far from compre

tending these implications today Communal concepts of nationhood—Hindu Muslim or other—deny and run counter to them Therein lies a great danger to national unity and social amity Unfortunately the present level of politics being what it is politicians are not wanting who are prepared to exploit every superstition every obscurantist belief and every religious and caste prejudice

This arrests the process of enlightenment which modern science and the revival of ancient Indian spirituality—as epitomised in the Upanishadic age when the Indian mind knew no shackles and soared to the highest—have ushered in Considered from this point of view the process of Indian unity is a process of intellectual and spiritual enlightenment

Case for Smaller States

SINCE THE PASSING of the Nehru era and the emergence of non Congress governments the States of India have grown rapidly in political impor tance As a result they are demanding more and more powers for themselves This trend is pro ducing a fear in some quarters that the Centre will gradually become weaker and that the whole pro cess may end up in the country s disintegration It is proposed that the Centre should be strengthen ed further by loading it with more powers

It seems to me that the remedy might prove to be worse than the disease Two results might follow firstly Centre State relations might further be strained and secondly the Centre might become too flabby and overburdened to be able to func tion properly which would mean in reality a weaker Centre The strength of the Union Govern ment will not grow by adding to its list of powers and functions and substracting from that of the State governments but by giving to each powers and functions which should appropriately belong to them

However considering the vast population of the country and its many diversities it is in the very nature of things that as time passes the States,

particularly those with non Congress administra tions will exert increasing pressure on the Centre for more power for themselves As the Centre itself is constituted of the States representatives it will not be able for political reasons to resist the pressure for long

Further there is no reason why this process of decentralisation and devolution should halt at the State capitals In fact it would be contrary to the spirit and aims of democracy A farsighted and genuinely democratic Centre should actively pro mote the extension of the process downward to to the district level so that instead of power being distributed among the present more than 20 States only it is spread over the 350 odd districts of the country In fact the institutional structure for this already exists in the zila parishads or district councils only they have to be made genuine self governing institutions In this manner two vital and major objectives could be achieved at once indirect and automatic strengthening of the Centre and the Union of India and broadening the democratic structure to enable greater participation of the people in government

An obvious corollary of this process is breaking up the oversized States such as UP Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and a few others Except for the five Hindi speaking States each major linguistic group has a State to itself This creates the evil of what has come to be known as linguism' Breaking up the large States apart from resulting in more compact efficient and close to the people administration should also go far to

linguistic jingoism

Pandit Nehru expressed this opinion when I met him and suggested bifurcation of U P Though he wanted the State to be divided the late Govind Ballabh Pant totally opposed the idea

Small States would not weaken the Centre as feared by some but would on the other hand strengthen it It is wrong to think that if West Bengal and Bihar or Gujarat and Maharashtra are merged the nation would become united and if they are separate unity would be broken

The bigger the States the weaker the Centre Smaller States would be nearer the people and then only would the purpose behind the creation of States be achieved My thinking on this question has all along been that while the Centre should be strong in respect of truly Central subjects and while I wish very much that the leadership at the Centre should also be strong at the same time States should be given a much freer hand in managing their affairs

Centre state relations would improve if the States were given more and more responsibilities and powers This could be achieved in the frame work of the existing Constitution and the conventions developed in the last 22 years If however amendment of the Constitution becomes absolutely necessary there is no reason why it should not be done A permanent finance commission for continuous review of the financial condition of the State governments should be constituted and it should have before it clearcut principles for allocating funds to States from the Central divisible pool

Our National Language

UNITY IN DIVERSITY has been universally recognised as being the outstanding characteristic of Indian history and society But it would be dangerous to forget that this unity was evolved in the course of thousands of years by inculcating in the diverse peoples of this country the spirit of mutual tolerance and adjustment Whenever an attempt was made to impose unity by force it led invariably to disunity and disintegration There is a serious danger of the same experience being repeated if in the name of national unity an attempt is made to impose an official language whatever it be upon unwilling sections of the people

Coming from a Hindi speaking State I do not hesitate to say that the opposition to Hindi in the South would never have been so vehement if the Hindi enthusiasts had not been so impatient and had relied more on persuasion and tried quietly to propagate Hindi wherever people were prepared to learn it This process might appear to be indefinitely long but on deeper thought it might be found to be the shortest

At the same time, if the advocates of Hindi had turned their enthusiasm and zeal to Hindi as fast as possible and to make it the

and intellectual language in the Hindi States in an effective and adequate measure the chances of national acceptance of Hindi would have been greatly improved While in both these respects considerable progress has been made it is still very inadequate and ineffective To promote national unity and the cause of Hindi the Hindi States should also have made a serious effort to make every student learn at some appropriate stage another Indian language preferably one of South India Hitherto the progress made in this direc *tion is not worth mention*

Barring a few extremists nobody suggests that English and other foreign languages should be banished from schools The vast majority of people in this country including those who speak Hindi would unhesitatingly agree about the importance of learning foreign languages to keep abreast of science and modern knowledge They would even have no objection to *compulsory* teaching of English as a language at the appro priate stage

But no matter how important learning foreign languages might be none of them can become an effective and creative medium of education There is general agreement that the medium of education must be the language of the child s environment However desirable it might be for us to learn English German and Russian the *medium* of education in this country must be the regional language Education through a foreign language can only result in mediocrity and stunt *ing of originality and creativity*

All that however is not the real issue The heart of the present controversy is whether any period of time should be defined within which English could be given up as an associate or inter State language and Hindi *alone* could come to acquire that status The Government of India proposes to fix no time limit and has aroused strong and widespread suspicion not only among Hindi speaking people but also among others who wish to see Hindi become the national language The suspicion is that the absence of such a limit would release the Centre from any pressing, and real responsibility to take the necessary steps to make it possible for Hindi *ever* to assume the role of a national language Already there is a deep and widespread feeling that the present unpre paredness of Hindi to take on that role is due not so much to obstruction from the South as to the failure of the Central Government to fulfill its obligations in that behalf

For instance States that had already taken steps to make Hindi the medium of instruction at the university stage had to reverse gear just because competitive examinations for the Central Services continued to be held in English It was not expected that those exams would be held *only* in Hindi But if Hindi was to be enabled to become the national language steps should have been taken to see that Central examinations were held *both* in Hindi and English This is only one example of the lapse of the Centre in this matter

I must also express here my deep anxiety the danger of mixing religion with

Hindi has nothing to do with Hinduism There are millions of Hindus who do not speak Hindi and many non Hindus whose mother tongue is Hindi The question of Hindi must therefore be kept strictly apart from religious sentiment and such things as saffron robes Incidentally as a Hindu I expect more exemplary behaviour from our saffron robed preceptors than was witnessed on the floor of the Lok Sabha a few years ago May be the leaders of the Hindu religious orders and our Shankaracharyas should give the matter serious thought

Monster of Communalism

THE PRESENT YEAR and the preceding ones have been particularly bad in all three respects of communalism obscurantism and bigotry—three faces of the same evil There have been many communal riots burning alive of Harijans and, not the least cases of human sacrifice These incidents are a warning and a symptom a symptom of a serious disease which afflicts the nation and a warning whose neglect will spell national disaster

Like the two worlds of the rich and poor, we also have the world of the enlightened and emancipated elite and the other of the educated and uneducated millions who are prisoners of [prejudice superstition and ignorance But while one may understand that the rich will keep their distance from the poor it is difficult to comprehend why the enlightened have abdicated [from their clear duty and felt no commitment to the battle against the forces of darkness One of the most deplorable features of the national scene is this failure of the elite to play their role in the renaissance of [Indian enlightenment The result is that even the seats of high learning are being desecrated by communalism and bigotry

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glory of Indian History and civilisation Such persons paradoxical though this may seem are in reality the enemies of Hinduism itself and of the Hindus Not only do they degrade the noble religion and destroy its catholicity and spirit of tolerance and harmony but they also weaken and sunder the fabric of the nation of which the Hindus form such a vast majority

There is another sense in which the Hindu communalists are endangering the very community of which they claim to be the champions Because of the divisions within Hindu society of unequal castes and still more unequal outcastes the spirit of communalism, once aroused and yoked to the wagon of politics will be bound to set up as indeed it has begun to do already one combination of castes against another combination, and a combination of the outcastes against them all

Regarding the RSS there are two remarks I wish to make When the Sangh was under a shadow after Gaddhiji s murder there were many protestations about its being entirely a cultural organisation But apparently emboldened by the timidity of the secular forces it has thrown its veil away and has emerged as the real power behind and controller of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh The secular protestations of the Sangh will never be taken seriously unless it cuts the bonds which tie it so firmly to the RSS machine Nor can the RSS be treated as a cultural organisation so long as it remains the mentor and effective manipulator of a political party

The other remark I wish to address to the RSS